hola!

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number four

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Address for correspondence, subscriptions, contributions, hate letters, whatever: Carol A. (Strick) Strickland, Rt. 7, Lot 55, Pineview Trailer Court, Greenville, NC 27834. Please note: this is a new address, my third in as many issues. There's also a new phone number: (919)758-0485. No calls after midnight EST, please.

We now have subscriptions to HOLA!: send in a multiple of $1.25 and you'll get that many issues. If the price changes, and it seems very unlikely right now, subscribers will have one issue's grace before the price change affects them.

Back issues: issues # 1 and 2 are available @ $1.00; #3 is $1.25 -- these prices are including postage. They are also to be paid in American or equivalent currency, please. I'll accept stamps, I'm not proud; but PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH!!!

Contributions are welcome! If you wish to do so, please write first so I can give you specifications!!! From here on out, I'm trashing or sending back any stuff that is blatantly out of line with these specs, okay? For ideas for contributions: next ish will center around Superman/Supergirl with a fairly large subsection on Wonder Girl/Woman. The issue after (#6) will be all WW/Wonder Family, and the one after that (#7) will probably be Justice Society, due to popular demand. Suggestions for future issues are welcome. As usual, miscellaneous articles will be included in each issue. Preliminary deadline for issue #5: 20 Dec. Final: 20 Jan. (Who's laughing out there?)

Oh yeah. The Legion of Super-Heroes, Wonder Woman, Black Canary, the Justice Society, and all the various and sundry DC characters alluded to in these pages are © DC Comics, Inc. The X-Men and the sundry and various Marvel characters also alluded to herein are © Marvel Comics Group.

CONTENTS

Bob Wright depicts the creme de la creme of the Legionnaires

agora

by Strick

AFTA 3: Bill-Dale Marcinko does it again! If you get off on often-banal reviews about anything and everything, you'll love this! Between Bill-Dale's sickly "humorous" harangues, there are very few bright spots such as H!'s own Ken Meyer's illoes. Sorry, Bob Soderberg. ($1.50, 8½x11 offset, 68 pp: Bill-Dale Marcinko, 47 Crater Ave, Wharton NJ 07885)

PORTIA PRINZ: The absorbing plot continues with more proselytizing than usual in issue #5. The artwork is awkwardly stylish; the characters are captivating in this history of the Glamazons. ($1, 8½x11 offset(halftone), 32 pp: Desperado-Eastern, 31½ Roberts Rd. #2, Cambridge MA 02138)

MANTRA: This tiny zine boasts a Gene Day strip, very well drawn, with a plotline straight from the most chilling of EC days. Otherwise, there's not much. Hopefully, future issues (@40¢) will contain more substance. (Free, 5½x8½ offset, 16 pp: Steve Keeter, 101 Martha's Lane, Greenville NC 27834)

DYNAZINE: Largely a reviewzine, Dynazine also has a "Johann the Barbarian" strip. Typoes and amateur art abound, but the writing seems as though it might develop into something in the future. (75¢, 5½x8½ offset, 16pp: Eric Scalzi, 8 Palmer Dr, Canton MA 02021)

ARF ARF! A Popeye/Thimble Theatre zine with good writing style, though the ditto is a little hard to read. If you're a Popeye fan, this zine is for you! (Free, 8½x11 ditto, 10 pp: Diamond Pubs., 1040B Harwood Dr, Sumpter SC 29150)

ALPHA CENTURA COMMUNICATOR #5: This is a UofNM club zine, and contains such things as you might expect: poetry, intelligent analyses, reviews, and horrible story/puns! Definitely worth the price. ($4/12 issues ((monthly)), 7x8½ offset, 12pp: C.K. Laurion, 1609 Roma NE, Albuquerque NM 87106)

GREAT KRYPTON #1: The debut of a major fanzine -- buy it! The Superman Family finally get their own fanzine. ($1.25, 8½x11 offset, 28 pp: Kevin Gould, 7707 Meadow Rd, #209, Dallas TX 75230)

PAIGE PROFILE #4: Amateur stripzine, done in the Marvel style. There's a lot of enthusiasm going on, but I think the artists/writers should develop their own style instead of reviving dead plots. (75¢, 5½x8½ offset, 48 pp: Steve Streeter, 1104 West Lincoln, Mt. Prospect IL 60056)

BEM 22: A major UK zine, chock-full of news, reviews, analyses and plain old, good articles! ($5/6 issues in the US, 8½x11 offset, 28 pp: Martin Lock, 3 Marlow Ct., Brittania Sq, Worcester WR1 3Dp, England)

the turkey trots

by Jon Liggett

After spending Thanksgiving and Christmas making sure my own neck was not on the chopping block, something us Turkeys have to be careful about, I suddenly found myself with a column to do. Well, since most columns at the end of the year are either devoted to analyzing the major events of the past year, or giving out awards to best artists, writers, etc, I decided to do the same. Here then are the first annual "Gobble Awards" which I present for your enjoyment:

THE "NOW YOU SEE IT...NOW YOU DON'T" AWARD: The DC Explosion

THE "OPEN MOUTH...INSERT FOOT" AWARD: Whoever wrote the note in the lettercol of Marvel's HUMAN FLY #19 that read "...the fact that the Fly's well on the way into his second year as a comic book character must say something about his success in the medium." #19 was the last issue in the run, HUMAN FLY having been cancelled shortly before.

THE "WHAT NEVER?...WELL HARDLY EVER" AWARD: To the people at Marvel who INSISTED that they would not raise their cover price to 40¢.

THE "BEST THING TO HAPPEN TO DC SINCE JENETTE KAHN" AWARD:

for our stunning cover!

COLUMNS

A particularly brilliant "Pure Bellona" was shelved this issue, but will return to its usual place with the next! "Agora's" here, though, with fanzine reviews by Strick, below. Jon Liggett's awards are a year old, but still very pertinent as he hands out his Turkeys in "The Turkey Trots", p. 2.

SUBJECT OF THE ISSUE: THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

Nancy Northcott wonders about "Forsaking All Others" on p. 5. With a long article and a longer title, Margaret O'Connell presents a discussion about "Not-so-super Women in Groups, etc" starting on page 6 and continuing to... Page 12, where we find Robert A. Rusk's analysis of a "Legion Lightweight."

"Edge of Ending" is the dire warning Chris Polk gives us on page 13 (of course!).

Strick didn't want to cut "The New Invisible Kid" from the issue, so it appears on page 14.

LEFT-OVERS (FROM LAST ISSUE: THE X-MEN)

Lilandra and MacTaggert are "The Princess and the Professor", as Kat Nickell points out on p. 17.

Robert Sodaro brings his "Outline of X-Men History" to a conclusion on p.18.

IN ADDITION

Crazy Bev Thon presents her "Comic Fan-atic Quiz" on p. 22 (and I refuse to tell anyone my score!)

WONDER WOMAN

On the same page Al Schroeder III gives his "Wonder Woman Chronology. There'll be a test on the material... The always-mysterious 'Ron looks at "The Amazing Invisible Plane", p. 25.

AND...

Al Schroeder III has his own Unified Field Theory which he writes about in "The Elementary Yet All-Emcompassing Explanation for Everything and Everyone...Almost." So who needs Nelson Bridwell when you can read about this on page 27?

And my favorite department, "Forum", is sadly much-cut because of the time lapse since last issue, which put 90% of our letters badly out of date. Next time should be better...if you write! Get your inspiration on p.29.

And finally, Rich Bruning depicts some familiar characters for the back cover!

Art credits (L:left, R:right, T:title illo, l:lower, U:upper)

Robert Bailey: 13R,21R,25T, 26L; Rusty Blair: 8L,22;Richard Bruning: baccover; Roger Caldwell:23 far left, 26R, 27l; Mike Chen: 5L, 10L, 11L, 12, 18T; Jeff Dee: 20R; Kim Demulder: 17R; Mark Ernst: 21l, 28; Bob Hardin: 23l; Pete Matthews: 10R,14L; Bob McLeod: 4illo;Ken Meyer, Jr:9,14R, 16, 18L, 19, 21; Ed Quinby: 3, 5T, 8R, 23U, 24L; Strick: 2,4 logo, 6T&l, 7R&L, 11R, 13L, 17T, 23L, 27T; Dave Stuckey: 15, 17L, 19R, 20L; Rick Taylor: 4 illo; Bob Wright: front cover, 24R

Fred Pembeck.

THE "BEST REASON TO AVOID SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER HEROES FOR THE NEXT FEW ISSUES" AWARD: Gerry Conway

THE "SECOND BEST REASON TO AVOID SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER HEROES FOR THE NEXT FEW ISSUES" AWARD: Dave Hunt

THE "KAPOW #2" AWARD: LEGION OUTPOST #10. RUNNER UP: HOLA! #4

THE "MAKE MINE MATTEL" AWARD: Shogun Warriors

THE "OR EVEN TONKA" AWARD: Micronauts

THE "FIRST BORN MALE CHILD" AWARD: 1978 Copyright Law and especially the sections dealing with "Works made for hire."

THE "IT'S A BIRD, IT'S A PLANE, IT'S FORBUSH MAN" AWARD: PIZZAZZ for their December 1978 issue.

THE "CHARLOTTE BRINKMAN CHOREOGRAPHY" AWARD: (tie) Hulk Lake (performed at the San Diego Con) and the "ballet" sequence in SUPERMAN: THE MOVIE.

THE "PLEASE DON'T SQUEEZE THE CHARMIN" AWARD: Marvel's BATTLESTAR GALACTICA tabloid

THE "BOB AND RAY" AWARD: Len Wolfman and Marv Wein...or is it Marv Wolfman and Len Wein, I can never tell them apart.

THE "BLESSED EUTHANASIA" AWARD: CBS cancelling "Wonder Woman". What took so long?

THE "AWARD FOR A COLUMN IN A MAJOR FANZINE, BY A MAJOR TURKEY, THAT IS RUN IN SAID FANZINE ONLY BECAUSE THE EDITOR IS A NICE PERSON /ain't it the truth? --SJ/ AND HATES TO SEE A GROWN TURKEY CRY": "The Turkey Trots." (Ahh, gee whiz, *blush* you shouldn't have.)

Well, that's it for this time. Next time I plan to solve all the major continuity problems in Marvel, DC, Charlton, Atlas, Fawcett, Gold Key, Harvey, Archie, Red Circle, and every other major company that has ever published even one issue of a comic!!!

Maybe.

THE Legion OF SUPER-HEROES

Forsaking All Others

by Nancy Northcott

We now have two married couples at DC who are current or former members of the LSH, and if Karate Kid's comment in SATISH #246 is any indication, we will soon be seeing more of the same. That would be fine and good; I certainly have no objection to the institution of marriage. However, I have plenty of objections to the way Paul Levitz seems to think of it. For example, turn to page 12, panel 4 of SATISH #224, in which Saturn Girl says, "I must forget... that I am Mrs. Garth Ranzz and become Saturn Girl once more." What a piece of melodramatic, ridiculous garbage that statement is!

In the first place, marriage implies forsaking all others, not forsaking an integral part of oneself. And I would submit that the type of behavior in which Imra was about to engage was second nature to her long before she ever saw Garth Ranzz. Anyone who has ever read any of the countless reruns (read: reprints. I also read TV GUIDE) of the Legion's origin story will recall that Imra warned that men in the crowd were planning to assassinate R. J. Brande as she arrived on Earth, some time before Brande formed the Legion. To imply, as Levitz does, that such activity is mutally exclusive of being married to Garth is therefore implying that marriage requires giving up any part of oneself not totally in one's spouse's interest. If that were true, marriage would require an instant personality metamorphosis. People would not be living with the person they fell in love with, because they fall in love (it is devoutly to be hoped) with more than just a body. Skills and the uses to which they are put are part and parcel of the personality, the package with which someone falls in love. If being married to Garth means Imra can't use her powers for good without setting the marriage aside "for the moment," then people marry only to bodies; characteristics of personality are manifested only in application, after all.

In the second place, the statement is ridiculous on its face. Do we see Lightning Lad saying, "I must forget for the moment that I am married to Imra before I blast these turkeys?" Of course not! Put the words in another mouth and you see how ridiculous they are. Marriage is supposed to be a union of equals, a partnership. It may not have reached that state yet, but let's hope it does by the 30th Century! If my sister were to say, "I must forget that I am Mrs. Hansen and go arrange these flowers (she works for a florist), my brother-in-law would put his foot "where the sun doesn't shine." Put the words in another situation and they are still ludicrous!

In the third place, let's look at this "Mrs. Garth Ranzz" business. Mr. Levitz may not be aware of it, but that title litterally means "the mistress of Garth Ranzz." It is objectionable to many women today because it implies the old idea that in marriage the husband and the wife are merged as one, with the husband being the one, an idea that still exists as part of property law. It implies a rejection of one's own identity in favor of becoming an extension of someone else's. Maybe people will not be hung up about things like that by 2979, but if so, why isn't Garth ever referred to as Mr. Imra Ardeen? It works both ways, or it doesn't work at all. As the old saying goes, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. (According to the December, '79 issue of PSYCHOLOGY TODAY, 10% of the women getting married these days are keeping their maiden names. If that trend continues, it should be up to about 100% by 2979.) The same kind of attitude on Mr. Levitz' part is implied in the Collector's Edition in which Saturn Girl and Lightning Lad were married. Imra is slapped, and Garth reacts with "Nobody does that to my wife," not "Nobody does that to Imra." Once again, the idea of the wife as chattel of the husband and under his protection comes through clearly.

Mr. Levitz is, in general, a fine writer, and he is certainly entitled to his own opinion, just as I am entitled to disagree with it. At least he didn't put such words in the mouths of Duo Damsel and Bouncing Boy.* It is quite likely, however, that if one must choose between his attitude and that of the writers at Marvel, that of the Marvel writers will generally prevail among older readers of comics.** It should be noted here that no such fuss about marriage was made when Duo Damsel arrived to save Projectra's life in SATISH #209. But then, that story was written by Jim Shooter, not by Paul Levitz. I have been reading the adventures of the Legion with great enjoyment since 1963. But I refuse to pay 40¢ (ye gods!) to be disgusted. And if that kind of speech keeps cropping up, multiplied by an increase in the number of married couples in the Legion, I will be disgusted more often than interested. Strick, you wanted controversial articles. I hope this fills the bill!

---

* But then, he didn't put many words of any sort in their mouths.

** You never see the Scarlet Witch and the Vision, or Henry and Janet Pym, or Sue and Reed Richards (any more) (much) imply that being married precludes functioning as a superhero, do you?

Not-So-Super Women in Groups:
Obscure Female Legionnaires, Invulnerability, and Superheroines' Boyfriend Problems

by Margaret O'Connell

The Legion of Super-Heroes is often touted as the most non-sexist of all supergroups. This is certainly true of the Legion's earlier days, when it almost always had several female members who took an active part in its adventures, in vivid contrast to all other super-groups of the time, who seemed to consider one token woman per group more than enough. In Marvel comics especially, the lone female who managed to wangle membership in a group like the Fantastic Four or the Avengers was there purely for decorative purposes, as the unreliable powers and frequent poorly-timed fainting spells of heroines like the Invisible "Girl," the Scarlet Witch, the Wasp, and Marvel Girl (now immeasurably improved in her current incarnation as Phoenix of the new X-Men) continually demonstrated.

Even today, the Legion has a higher percentage of female members than any other group except the Elementals, a team composed of one man, the Gnome, and three women, the Sylph, the Salamander, and the Undine, who have made two recent guest appearances in SUPER FRIENDS, courtesy of E. Nelson Bridwell. (I am not counting splinter groups like the "Lady Liberators" in AVENGERS #83, who only appeared in one story and were mostly members of other groups already anyway.)

The Legion can't match this unprecedented majority of female members, but since eight out of 23 members (that is, Dawnstar, Dream Girl, Light Lass, Phantom Girl, Princess Projectra, Shadow Lass, Shrinking Violet, and the recent rejoined Saturn Girl), or a little less than one-third of the team, are women, they come a lot closer to having equal numbers of heroes and heroines than groups like the JLA and the Avengers, who still have no more than three or four active female members each out of a total of 15 or 16.

However, numbers aren't everything, as a closer examination of many Legion stories reveals. In practice, the degree of equal treatment accorded the women of the Legion depends on who's writing the story and how feminist he's feeling that day.

Jim Shooter is an interesting case in point. Often praised for writing Legion scripts that prominently featured superheroines, Shooter also produced a number of stories in which the female Legionnaires were little more than glorified love interests for the male heroes. Unsurprisingly, the two different types of stories were written at different times -- the more "liberated" ones during the several-year period in the '60's when Shooter was a freelance writer for DC, and the more traditional ones in the mid-'70's, when he returned to writing the Legion for a briefer period of about a year and a half.

It is unlikely that the vast difference between the portrayal of women in Shooter's early Legion stories and his later ones is entirely attributable to the influence of Murray Boltinoff, who as Shooter's editor in the '70's interfered a great deal with his basic story concepts and plots. It seems significant that many of Shooter's first Legion stories were written when he was only 13 or 14, presumably before he really had to cope with women as potential sexual partners in his own life to any great extent. It is precisely those stories in which female Legionnaires are presented mainly as simply fellow teammates and human beings who happen to be women. There is little boy-girl pairing off of the type common in more recent Legion tales by Shooter and by other writers.

In contrast to these early scripts, which present both male and female Legionnaires in a virtually sex-blind manner, the stories written during Shooter's second, shorter stint at DC place great emphasis on rather sudsy romance. In these stories, written when Shooter was in his twenties, the heroines are usually quite stereotypically "feminine" and often seem more concerned with finding a boyfriend than saving the universe.

The latter tendency is especially apparent when two Shooter scripts spotlighting the relatively obscure Legion-connected heroines Night Girl and Laurel Kent are compared with two scripts by the more self-consciously feminist Paul Levitz featuring the same characters.

In the Shooter Night Girl script, "A Death Stroke at Dawn" (SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES #212, Oct. 1975), the story begins with Night Girl, a member of the Legion of Substitute Heroes who becomes super-strong only in darkness or deep shadow, completely helpless before a band of crooks in a brightly-lit room. (Yes, she is rescued.) As if this weren't enough, throughout the story, Lydda (Night Girl) Jath's Legion friends continually harp on her weakness and repeatedly make statements like, "You must've realized how dangerous it was to mix with vicious thugs like that...if all they had to do is flip a light switch to weaken you!" (p.4, back-up).

In the first place, this is nonsense. Non-super-powered heroines like Batgirl and Black Canary (who rarely uses her one super-power , her sonic cry), not to mention male heroes like Batman and Green Arrow, "mix with vicious thugs like that" every day without benefit of super-strength or other powers. The limita-

tions on Lydda's super-powers might be enough to disqualify her from being a full-fledged member of the Legion, which fights whole star fleets every week and saves the universe from unimaginable menaces at least once a month. But if she had some martial arts training and used her wits instead of despairing whenever the lights are turned on, there would be no reason why she couldn't fight ordinary or even not-so-ordinary criminals while it was daylight, even if bug-eyed monsters were a bit out of her league.

Even with super-strength that vanishes in bright light, Night Girl would be much more likely to be of use in a fight than other heroines the Legion has accepted as full-fledged members. I am thinking especially of Dream Girl, whose abilities seem to be limited to predicting trouble without being able to do anything about it, and, to a somewhat lesser extent, Phantom Girl and Shrinking Violet, whose specialities appear to be getting two enemies to charge at them at once and then shrinking or phantoming out of the way so that the two foes have a head-on collision and knock each other out.

But in this story, at least, Night Girl's vulnerability to light is the least of her problems. From flashbacks, we learn that Lydda suffers from not one, but three, related ailments that superheroines are often heir to. The first is the misfit superheroine syndrome -- inability to be fully accepted by anyone as either a hero or a woman. Apparently the unfortunate Lydda had this trouble even in the bosom of her own family. As her scientist father bathes her in his "vializing ray" to make her super-strong, he tactlessly tells her, "I always wanted a son, Lydda, but your mother died soon after you were born!" (p.5, back-up). It's obvious who would have gotten the super-powers if Mr. Jath had had a son. Poor Lydda is second best even to her own father.

Night Girl's second problem stems from the first. She has the typical difficulties with men suffered by virtually all superheroines. Most male superheroes have girlfriends who are just ordinary people, but even the few superheroines, such as Wonder Woman and Spider-Woman, who do have non-super-powered steady boyfriends, find that their "superiority" to the men makes for a stormy relationship. Superheroines involved with male heroes often fare little better, finding themselves relegated to the role of glorified sidekick. Of course, this is virtually impossible with heroines who are conspicuously more powerful than most male superheroes, like Supergirl, and the result is that these rare heroines have no boyfriends at all. Night Girl sums it all up in a nutshell: "The boys I used todate are afraid of me now! They don't like the idea of a girl being better...far stronger than they are!" (p.5, back-up).

Lydda also has one other problem which is somewhat more unusual. In fact, the only other place I have come across it is in the 1977 "origin" of the Black Canary, written by Gerry Conway (naturally). This problem is the "daddy's girl" syndrome. This syndrome presents the reader with the paradoxical spectacle of a woman who enters the difficult and dangerous, but glamourous, field of crimefighting not out of any ambitions or convictions of her own, but so that her father can vicariously fulfill his ambitions through her. In other words, such a woman becomes a superheroine to please her father -- certainly one of the more bizarre motivations on record.

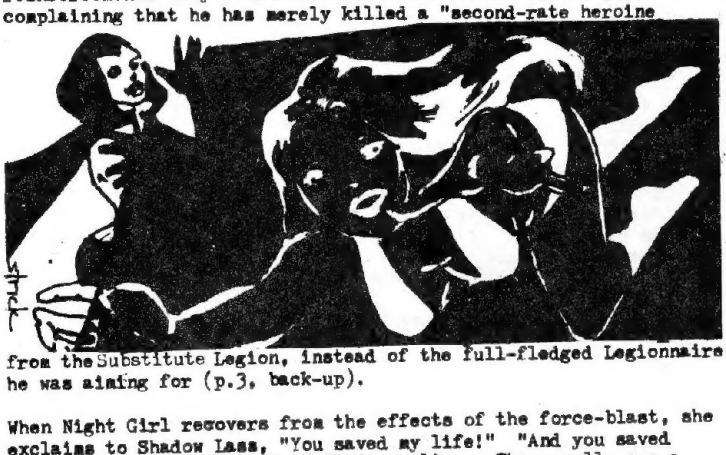
Jim Shooter's 1975 version of Night Girl is definitely this type. At the beginning of her career, as we see in a flashback, Lydda Jath has absolutely no desire to become a superheroine on her own account. As she lies on a lab table, bathed in her father's vitalizing ray, she thinks only, "Dad has great ambitions for me to become famous! I hope I fulfill his wish!" And when she is rejected by the Legion because "my power had a defect which ruined my father's greatest dream," Night Girl thinks not of her own ruined future, but of "Poor Dad! He'll be so disappointed!" (p.5, back-up).

But Lydda's main difficulty in this story is the boyfriend problem. As mentioned above, the boys of her own world, Kathoon, where she had super-powers all the time because there was no sun (presumably it was a colony planet artificially heated from within, or some such thing), would have nothing to do with Night Girl. Her difficulties with men were only resolved by coming to Earth, where she met Cosmic Boy (Rokk Krinn), whom she describes as, "So masculine and secure! He makes me feel like a girl instead of a freak!" (p.5, back-up). Significantly, though they are both superheroes, he is the one who is "better," at least in the opinion of the Legion membership committee. Only he is considered powerful enough to be a full-fledged Legionnaire. Night Girl, with her off-again, on-again powers, has to settle for the Legion of Substitute Heroes, "all Legion rejects," as she points out on p.5. It is also worth noting that since on Earth Lydda only has super-powers at night, during the day, at least, Cosmic Boy is stronger than she is. This artificial restoration of the conventional parallel between male/female and strong/weak is rather important to both of them, as is evident from the remarks made in the last panel of the story, which I will discuss later.

The events that lead up to the "damsel in distress" opening panel of "A Death Stroke at Dawn" begin when Night Girl refuses to resign herself to being less of a superhero than her boyfriend is, as we learn from yet another flashback. When Lydda insists on going after crooks on her own (to fulfill her father's ambitions no doubt) even when she could be dating Cosmic Boy, instead of quietly dwindling into a glorified girlfriend who gets to save the day with the other Subs once in a blue moon, "even he /Cosmic Boy/ rejected me," cuttingly remarking, "Who do you think you are, Supergirl?" Lydda pleads, "But I have a job to do -- and you should respect that!" Rokk merely replies, "With your weakness? Don't you think lawbreakers know...that every time you go out, you're putting your life on the line?...Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to find another date!"(p.6, back-up).

Heartbroken, Lydda nevertheless sallies forth to prove that she can be a success as a superheroine, even if everyone else (and she herself)regards her as a failure as a woman. Actually, she proves just the opposite. In fact, Night Girl bungles the job as a superheroine so thoroughly that she not only fails to capture the crooks she's after -- three times -- but three times has to be rescued by others herself.

As described above, Night Girl finds herself helpless at the very beginning of the story, when "Crafty" Colson and his gang turn on the bright lights in their lair. This time it's Shadow Lass who saves her by flooding the room with strengthening darkness. The two heroines then attack the crooks together, but one of the villains unfortunately proves able to see just as well in the dark as they can, and hits Night Girl with a force-blast meant for Shadow Lass. Lydda succeeds in saving Shady by shielding her with her own body, but not without being stunned by the blast herself in the process. Shadow Lass then saves her a second time by dragging her limp body out of sight before Colson and his mob have a chance to discover that Night Girl isn't really dead, as they think. Meanwhile, the crooks rush off to avoid the Legion reinforcements they fear Shadow Lass has summoned, the gunman complaining that he has merely killed a "second-rate heroine



from the Substitute Legion, instead of the full-fledged Legionnaire he was aiming for (p.3, back-up).

When Night Girl recovers from the effects of the force-blast, she exclaims to Shadow Lass, "You saved my life!" "And you saved mine! What a team we make!" Shady replies. They really are a good team, buch more effective together than either one would be alone -- at least, they would be with a little practice. Shady could protect Night Girl from bright light with her shadow cones, and Night Girl could use her super-strength and partial invulnerability to protect Shadow Lass from attackers who can see in the dark. Unfortunately, this idea was never picked up on, and this one scene of this one story seems to be the only time the two heroines have ever worked together anywhere so far.

Thus, in spite of all this momentary camaraderie, when Night

Girl insists on charging off after "Crafty" Colson again alone, Shadow Lass makes only a feeble effort to dissuade her, and doesn't attempt to follow her at all. This conveniently results in Lydda's having to be rescued by the repentant Cosmic Boy when her powers fade out as she's trying to rescue him, which paves the way for a rather cloyingly presented reconciliation.

Although Lydda had set out to prove to Cosmic Boy and herself that she can be a good superheroine even if she's inadequate as a woman, what she ends up proving is that she's an inadequate superheroine, but a model of traditional womanhood, despite her "unfeminine" super-strength. Night Girl's noble, but ineffectual, attempt to save Rokk from the same crooks who had injured her earlier demonstrates all the conventional womanly virtues -- self-sacrifice, concern for others, blind loyalty to her man (Cosmic Boy had treated her quite cruelly earlier in the evening, but Lydda still rushes frantically to his rescue, exclaiming, "The sun is rising! My power is fading but I -- I've got to save him!"(p.7, back-up), and, last but not least, incompetence. It's not much fun trying to be masculinely protective of a woman who's perfectly capable of taking care of herself -- and you. And since being masculinely protective is one of the things Rokk Krinn does best, Lydda's brave, but inept, attempt to rescue him (as well as the insipidness of the dumb blonde he had taken out that evening when Night Girl refused to give up her own plans) convince him that Lydda is the only girl for him, even if her insistence on being Night Girl, and not just Cosmic Boy's girlfriend, in inconvenient at times.

By this time, Lydda, too, has learned her lesson. Ironically, Night Girl's misguided attempts to prove herself as a superheroine result in a reaffirmation of the very aspect of her relationship with Cosmic Boy that she had originally rebelled against -- the fact that Rokk refuses to accept her as a fellow superhero. Protectively picking up the injured Lydda after fighting off Colson and his thugs, Cosmic Boy tells her, "I'm taking you to the medi-center! After you've been checked out, I know a swell spot for a picnic -- during daytime, of course --" "--When I can't resist you!" Night Girl coos adoringly. "You know how to reach a girl, don't you?" (p.8, back-up). And so they fly off into the sunrise -- literally -- reaffirmed in their original relationship as a superhero and his (slightly super-powered) girl.

Besides proving that, according to Shooter in 1975, both Cosmic Boy and Night Girl really prefer it when their relationship mimics the traditional ideal of the strong man and his weak woman, these final remarks have some rather disturbing implications. Night Girl's flattered delight at the thought of a picnic during daylight, "when I can't resist you," is unsettlingly reminiscent of the old myth that women are (or should be) flattered when men are so eager to sleep with them that they're willing to disregard the women's own wishes entirely and use force to get what they want. The fact that Night Girl seems to want the same thing that Cosmic Boy wants, but also wants to be in a situation where she can make a show of resistance which he can easily overcome by force, is even more ominous, since it implies that two other old myths are true -- that women really want to be raped and that when they say no, they don't mean it, but are merely being coquettish. This is not exactly the ideal thing for a child -- or anyone else -- to learn from a comic book.

The Night Girl who appears in "A World Born Anew!" (the World - smith story), by Paul Levitz and Paul Kupperberg (S/LSH #236, Feb.1978) is the exact opposite of the diffident, ineffectual creature in the Shooter script. Too much the opposite, in fact. In attempting to return Night Girl to the more self-confident, assertive personality she had in earlier Legion stories, especially the origin of the Legion of Substitute Heroes in ADVENTURE #306, Levitz has gone to the other extreme and made her more brash and obnoxious than his notorious Power Girl ever was, at least in the opening pages of the story.

Instead of being an insecure girl who feels like an unfeminine freak because of her super-strength, this Lydda is an aggressive castrating woman type. Lydda manages to sound smug and cocky here even while thanking Cosmic Boy's kid brother's girlfriend for the loan of a pair of magnetic-field bracelets during a game of magnoball on Cos' native planet of Braal. "Without them (the bracelets) I would've been at a slight disadvantage!" she self-satisfiedly proclaims. "After all, only natives of Braal have magnetic powers!" (p.2). Actually, without them she wouldn't have been able to play at all. But little things like facts never stop comic writers who are determined to characterize their heroines as "women's libbers" -- a tendency which Levitz fortunately shows some signs of outgrowing in his more recent scripts.

Night Girl needles Cosmic Boy mercilessly when it looks as if he and his brother are losing the game to her and Polla, the brother's girlfriend: "My, my! We certainly get touchy when we're losing, lover!...So let's play ball! I just love watching you -- lose! Ha, ha!"(p.2). And when Rokk calls her over to inspect her magnetic bracelets, Lydda taunts, "What's the problem, sweets? Are you checking out my equipment -- or just trying to sabotage my game?"(p.3). This is a far cry from the way she shrank from standing up to him in the Shooter story even over something much more important than a game of magnoball, and cried instead of contradicting him when he belittled her ability as a superheroine.

Cosmic Boy himself is even more self-consciously macho in this story than in the one by Shooter -- until he and Lydda go into action with the Legion. Then they work together as perfect equals, with no bickering about which is more powerful or "too weak" to do the job.

But on the magnoball court, Rokk's behavior is no more edifying than Lydda's. He is so grimly determined "not...to let some magnoball rookie walk all over us!"(p.3) that his own younger brother is prompted to say, "Can't have the big, bad super-hero beaten by a mere woman, huh, Rokk?" Cosmic Boy's testy denial of this is far from convincing: "My ego's not that big -- so shut up and play!"(p.4).

Fortunately, as mentioned above, all these petty differences disappear when the two superheroes are on the job as Legionnaires. Curiously, Night Girl's inferior status as a mere Sub is never mentioned in this story, although her subsequent appearance with the other Substitute Heroes during the recent Earthwar saga negates any suspicions that she may have been surreptitiously upgraded to full-fledged Legionnaire. Far from being the second-

rate bungler she is in the Shooter story in S/LSH #212, Night Girl is here a respected member of the team. Deputy Leader Element Lad assigns her to team up with Superboy to smash Worldsmith's planet-changing machine without even a moment's hesitation over whether she will be able to hold her own with the universe's mightiest super-teen -- and his confidence in her is amply justified. (Needless to say, this part of the story takes place at night.)

When Night Girl and Cosmic Boy attack Worldsmith before the rest of the Legion arrives, they both fail to make a dent in his defenses, but so do all the other Legionnaires, both male and female, until they -- more specifically, Princess Projectra -- come up with a clever plan to fool Worldsmith into thinking he is losing his planet-shaping powers. And when Worldsmith summarily bats Cosmic Boy out of the way in the preliminary struggle, Night Girl doesn't faint or make melodramatic threats of vengeance, as most heroines still do in similar situations, but pauses just long enough to make sure that "Rokk's all right -- but that guy obviously is not!"(p.7) before attacking herself.

Thus, though Night Girl starts out as a Gerry Conway-type egotistical prima donna in S/LSH #236, once the action starts, she calms down and becomes an effective member of the team instead of a horrible example of either excessive femininity or pathological female aggression. By the end of the story, the only thing even a nitpicking critic can find wrong with her is a tendency to talk too much like Spider-Man's pseudo-hip (ex?) girlfriend, Mary Jane Watson.

It's back to soap opera love stories and superheroines with romance on their minds in Jim Shooter's "Future Shock for Superboy" (S/LSH #217, June, 1976), the story that introduced Laurel Kent, 30th Century descendant of Superman and Legion trainee. The melodrama here begins in the first caption, which exclaims in sudsy tones, "He could find a needle in a haystack, so powerful was his super-vision! Yet, as he scanned every nook, searched every cranny of the city, the girl eluded him. Why? Who was she? The surprising answer would make for a ...'Future Shock for Superboy'"(p.1, back-up).

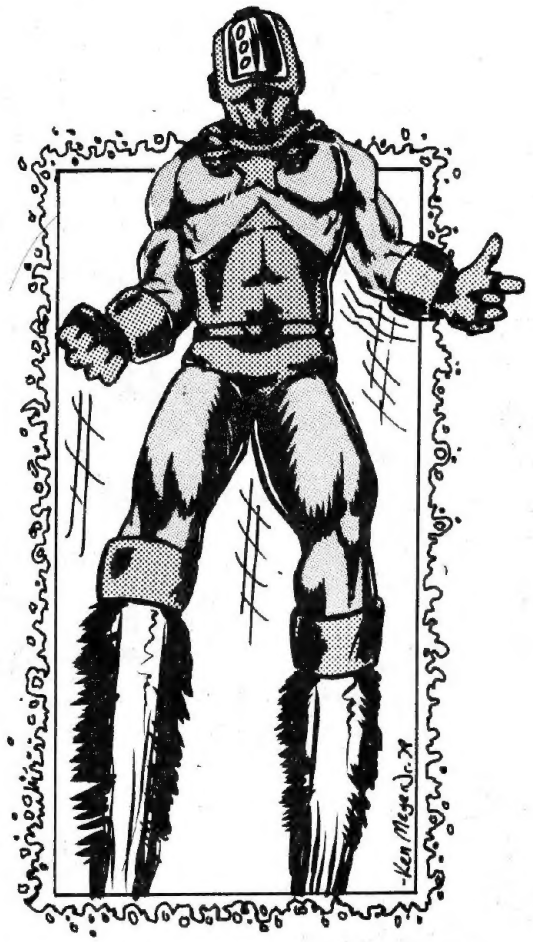
Although Laurel Kent in this story is as stereotypically feminine as Shooter's 1975 Night Girl in her obsession with meeting and catching the boy of her dreams, she is much less meek and passive, at least at the beginning of the tale. In fact, there is something quite appealing in the cleverness displayed by Laurel's bold plan to meet her attractive ancestor and her cool-as-a-cucumber demeanor when she is face to face with the famous teen, even if these admirable qualities seem somewhat misdirected here. (After all, the fellow is her who-knows-how-many-times-great-grandfather.).

The brief, doomed romance of Kal-El and Laurel (Laur-El?) begins when Superboy, arriving in 30th Century Metropolis half an hour early, for a Legion meeting, spots an "unlucky guy" "accidentally" falling into an elevated magnetic canal, right into the path of an iron freight barge. Upon closer inspection, the "guy" turns out to be "a girl! And wow-- what a girl!"(p.2, back-up).

The Boy of Steel's bemused stare is understandable. There certainly can't be too many females back in 1950's Smallville who walk around in skimpy Mike Grell costumes consisting of a bikini bottom and glorified suspenders that barely cover the breasts -- an outfit virtually identical to that worn by Night Girl in both stories previously discussed, incidentally. Obviously Grell had looked at a few too many issues of VAMPIRELLA.

Eager to make a big impression on the "damsel in distress," who "sure seems to be taking this calmly!," Superboy modifies his rescue plans accordingly. "I could just fly us out of her... but I feel like showing off a bit...by stopping it...like this!" the Teen of Steel thinks, halting the heavy freight barge with one hand. "I wonder if Gorgeous is impressed?"(pp.2-3, back-up). As he flies off with his several times-great-granddaughter, who tells him her name is Elna (an anagram which provides a pretty broad hint as to whom Superman will eventually marry), Superboy actually begins to flirt with her a little, declaring, "Well, Elna...I don't think I ever carried a prettier passenger!" "Elna" responds in kind: "And I never was held by a living legend before! I always wanted to meet you!" Superboy, thoroughly captivated, thinks, "She's fascinating! I know lots of pretty girls...but there's something about her..." (p.3, back-up), and suggest they spend the half hour before the Legion meeting together.

Later, as they stroll along hand in hand, the bemused Boy of Steel remarks wonderingly, "You've seen all my history tapes twice and read all my Legion adventures, but you still have a lot of questions! When do I find out about you?" At this crucial point, Widfire comes along, and Laurel hurriedly ducks around the



corner of a building and disappears even as Superboy is offering to introduce her to him. Superboy starts after her, frantically exclaiming that he doesn't even know her last name, "But I've got to stop her!" Wildfire temporarily foils this plan by reminding SB, as his Legion teammates call him, that they're already due at the meeting. But after it's over, Superboy determindedly sets off to find that "certain girl I just can't get out of my mind!"(p.4, back-up).

As the unsuspecting Boy of Steel flies off to check every building in the city with his X-ray vision, Laurel looks on from another part of Legion headquarters, thinking tearfully, "I should have told him the truth about myself! I should have told him right away! Why didn't I...? Hours later, heading back to Legion headquarters after a fruitless search, the Boy of Steel finally begins to suspect that there's more to this situation than meets the eye. "Why would she hide...why did she run from Wildfire...as if she didn't want him to recognize her?" he muses.

But just as it dawns on him that the Legion HQ is the one place he hasn't looked, Superboy sees, "Elna--! She was trying to break into our headquarters...and Wildfire is destroying her!"(p.5,back-up). But this appearance, too, is deceiving. As the Boy of Steel grabs Wildfire by the neck in a murderous rage, the "dead" "Elna" jumps up to stop him and reveal that what he saw was just a Legion training exercise.

At this point, "Elna" finally confesses to her confused ancestor, "I'm Laurel Kent! I wasn't harmed because I'm invulnerable! You haven't guessed, have you, that I'm your descendant!" As Superboy's jaw drops, Wildfire chimes in, "That's right! Eventually, when you become Superman, you'll marry and have kids ...and a family that will continue into the 30th Century!"

Turning back to Laurel, Superboy exclaims, "And you inherited my super powers?" Laurel replies, "Just one -- invulnerability! That's how I made the Legion academy!...Why did I want to meet you? You're my famous ancestor...I fled from Wildfire because he might give me away..." "But why didn't you want me to know?" the perplexed Boy of Steel asks. Eyes downcast, Laurel replies, "Because I liked you, a little too much, I suppose, and I knew you liked me, too! It figures, I guess..." "Why is that...?" her ancestor inquires. Reassured by Wildfire that it's all right to answer, since super-hypnosis will prevent Superboy from remembering anything about his own future when he returns to his own time, Laurel reveals, "I look very, very much like the girl you're

destined to marry!"(p.6,back-up).

Actually, as drawn by Mike Grell, Laurel looks more like Supergirl as drawn by Joe Orlando when she headlined ADVENTURE -- when she succeeds in looking like anyone but the standard Mike Grell woman, that is. However, she does have the family curl falling down onto her forehead, and in the one other story in which she appears, which was drawn by Jim Sherman, she bears a strong facial resemblance to Superboy himself. If Laurel Kent in this introductory story is supposed to remind Superboy of someone that he has actually already seen (which practically rules out Lois Lane, whose youthful escapades with Superboy were fleeting ones

indeed), it is probably his parents, or even himself.

The choice of invulnerability as the one power of Superman's that his 30th Century female descendant inherits is an interesting one. (Compare this to Klar Ken T5477, the Superman of the Legion's time, who inherited full Kryptonian super powers from g-grandpa Superman. He starred in his own mini-series in ACTION ca.1966.) Many comic writers seems to regard invulnerability as a particularly appropriate power for a woman, as is evidenced by the large number of superheroines who count some kind of invulnerability as one of thei major powers, or even their only one. Sue Storm's invisible powers somehow include the ability to generate force fields that protect her and anyone else within them from virtually anything a villain can throw at her, at least until she passes out from the strain of maintaining the field, as she usually either does or threatens to do. Supergirl is also invulnerable, though this should probably be chalked up to the fact that she is simply a female version of Superman, with the exact same powers he has.

But in the Legion itself, no less than three heroines besides Laurel Kent can be regarded as at least semi-invulnerable. Dawnstar can be hurt by a physical attack, but she must have some sort of invulnerability that enables her to survive the airless vacuum of space without freezing, suffocating, or exploding from internal pressures. (She must also have a pretty unique pair of wings to be able to fly in a non-atmosphere that doesn't contain so much as an air current, but that's another story.) Phantom Girl's ability to fade out to avoid being harmed amounts to virtual invulnerability, because if you can't touch her, how can you harm her? The same is true of DC's 1970's version of Phantom Lady, though not of the original Phantom Lady of the 1940's, who did not have the ability to become intangible. Finally, even Night Girl seems to to be at least partially invulnerable. In the 1975 Shooter story, Shadow Lass exclaims over the fact that Lydda has survived the blast meant for her: "She's alive! That force-blast would have shattered the skull of a Talokian rhinosaurus...but it only stunned her super-powerful body!" (S/LSH #212, p.4, back-up).

Of course, statements like this last are made about virtually all superheroes, male and female, with monotonous regularity. But it is impossible to find a male superhero whose main or only power is an inability to be hurt. Brainiac 5 has his force field -- but he also has his super-brain, and that receives a lot more emphasis when he takes part in Legion adventures than the force field does. The opposite is true of Sue Storm, Brainy's nearest match in terms of having both defensive/invulnerability powers an offensive powers. Brainiac 5 actually uses his super-intelligence most of the time to plan aggressive strategy, only falling back on his force field when cornered. Sue, on the other hand, spends most of her time in fights protecting herself, the rest of the FF, and/or various innocent bystanders with her force fields, and doesn't use her active abilities of throwing invisible force balls, etc., unless she is cornered or her teammates are too far away for her to help them by extending her force field over them.

Similarly, although the Vision,like Phantom Girl and Phantom Lady, has as one of his chief powers the ability to become intagible, he does not limit himself to using this ability devensively by fading out just in time for villains to bang into each other or the wall, as the two superheroines usually do. Instead, he uses the power offensively to disrupt opponents' metabolisms by solidifying his fist inside their bodies. Theoretically, this is something Phantom Girl and Phantom Lady ought to be able to do, too. Indeed, eleven years ago, in ADVENTURE 373, Phantom Girl tried it -- but made the mistake of making her entire body material; she was conked on the head and rendered out of action. She's never tried the stunt again, and probably never will -- not just because it might infringe powers copyrighted by Marvel, either.

Probably the reason for the popularity of invulnerability among superheroines is related to the notion that the average woman is more physically vulnerable to injury, as well as weaker, than the average man. (This isn't true, by the way. Studies have shown that women can tolerate more pain than men. They have to, to endure childbirth.) This idea in turn reflects the fact that women are not only supposedly more fragile than men, but are structurally susceptible to rape in a way that men are not.

One of the weirder classical myths makes the woman/vulnerability/rape connection explicit. According to CROWELL'S HANDBOOK OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY, by Edward Tripp, the sea god Poseidon raped a beautiful young woman named Caenis. Then, "when he offered to grant whatever boon she might choose /as a reward for services rendered, albeit unwillingly/, she asked him to make her a man, so that such an indignity might never happen to her again.

Poseidon not only kept his promise, but made Caenis -- now Caeneus -- invulnerable to weapons as well" (p.143).

Something quite similar happens in A SEA CHANGE, a recent novel by Lois Gould. Jessica, an unhappily married former model, is raped with a gun by a burglar she calls the Black Gunman, and subsequently decides to avert a possible recurrence of this, as well as escape from her stereotypically "female" problems (an overbearing and unfaithful husband, a catty, double-

crossing best friend, etc.), by becoming a black gunman herself. Somehow she succeeds in doing this, by means which are never made clear. (I told you it was weird.)

This age-old association of vulnerability of any sort in a woman with the possibility of rape is probably largely responsible for comic writers' apparent conviction that the most important thing for a superheroine to be able to do is prevent antagonists from so much as touching her. Being able to prevent villains from committing crimes or catching them when they do isn't nearly as important to a heroine, in these people's minds, as the ability to keep her own person unviolated by her foes even symbolically, by the infliction of a non-sexual injury. This also explains why the Comics Code used to forbid comics to depict a man striking a woman, something which many artists are still squeamish about drawing.

As mentioned above, even in this introductory story by Jim Shooter, Laurel Kent is presented as much more intelligent and self-possessed than Night Girl was in her back-up five issues earlier. However, Laurel, too, is reduced to tears and melodramatic declarations of romantic despair by the end of the story, and it is unlikely that Shooter would have allowed her to display such competence in carrying out her plans even in the first few pages if those plans had involved anything less traditionally "feminine" than winning the heart of a man. Thus, although she is, or at least starts out as, a much stronger character than the 1975 Shooter Night Girl, Laurel resembles Lydda in her easy susceptibility to male charm and her overwhelming concern with boys and romance. In one way, too, she is even more neurotic than the masochistically eager-to-please Night Girl. After all, it is a little unusual, not to say unhealthy, to have a crush on your own several-times-great-grandfather.

Fortunately, Laurel has apparently outgrown this doomed infatuation by her second -- and last, so far -- appearance, in "Dawnstar Rising," an untold tale of the Legion Academy by Paul Levitz and Paul Kupperberg (S/LSH #240, June, 1978). (I give Paul Levitz the main credit -- and blame -- for both this story and the one featuring Night Girl in S/LSH #236, despite the collaboration of Paul Kupperberg, because in both cases Levitz appears to be responsible for the plot.) In fact, in this story Laurel actually has a fellow Legion trainee, super-strong Jed Rikane, as a boyfriend. True, Jed is no Superboy -- he's a little swell-headed and appears to have more muscles than brains -- but at least he hasn't been dead for centuries.

The Paul Levitz version of Laurel in "Dawnstar Rising" retains all the good qualities of the Laurel in "Future Shock for Superboy" without any of the weak-kneed "femininity" she develops toward the end of that story or the abrasive manner Levitz's "liberated" version of Night Girl is saddled with at the beginning of S/LSH #236. Laurel's more mature attitude toward life, and the Legion, and her ability to empathize with others, stand out particularly clearly here in contrast with the behavior of her Legion Academy roommate, the prickly and arrogant Dawnstar, who is perhaps Levitz's most unsuccessful attempt at characterization. But even Dawnstar is won over by Laurel's intelligence and warmth.

True to form, Dawnstar initially rejects Laurel's overtures of friendship by sharply informing her that "all you people /in the Legion/ are interested in is showing off!"(p.8, back-up) after Laurel has listened sympathetically to Dawn's account of her difficult childhood and how she came to be at the Academy. But the stand-offish winged heroine demonstrates her respect and liking for her roommate the next morning, when the Legionnaires-in-training split up into teams to capture two dangerous creatures

that have escaped from their cages in the spaceport. As Jed Rikane hustles Laurel off to work with him, Dawnstar calls, "Laurel! Wait for...me...!"(p.9, back-up). This time, the long-suffering Laurel doesn't hear, but since the proudly self-sufficient Dawnstar considers few of her Legion colleagues worthy of her tolerance, much less her respect, for her to actually request her roommate's help on an assignment she is secretly convinced she can handle better on her own than all the others put together is a high compliment indeed.

Altogether, the Laurel in this story appears fairly consistent with the description of her as "Superman scholar Laurel Kent" in the "Legion Outpost" of a recent AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS. Instead of a girl with a morbidly incestuous fascination with a dead ancestor, she now seems to be a responsible person capable of putting her interest in her 20th Century forebear to good use as a historian. In fact, there are some hints in "Dawnstar Rising" that Laurel may be something of an expert on 20th Century history in general. Her exclamation of "By George -- I think you've got it!" on p.2 is virtually a direct quote from MY FAIR LADY, a musical which surely would not be familiar to most people of the 30th Century. And on p.6, Laurel is reading an old-fashioned 20th Century-type hardcover book, certainly not something the average 30th Century citizen would possess or bother with, considering the probably wide availability and convenience of reading material via viewscreens and microfilms in that era.

Perhaps I am refining too much on Laurel's friendship with Dawnstar, such as it is, and on her vaguely implied career as a historian. But what strikes me as most significant about Laurel Kent, in this story and even to a certain extent in the earlier one, is the fact that she seems to be a success at everything she does, something which is quite rare for a superheroine. She is a useful member of the Legion Academy, part of a loving -- and equal -- partnership with a fellow superhero, a good friend to a person who thinks she doesn't need any friends (Dawnstar), and perhaps even a serious historical scholar.

The last is particularly interesting, because it demonstrates an ability to adjust to everyday reality rare among heroes of either sex, but especially among superheroines. Unlike 20th

Century heroes like Green Arrow and Black Canary, who have become so absorbed in superheroics that they have let their secret identities virtually wither away, leaving them with almost no contact with ordinary people except as victims to be rescued (GA's recent campaign for mayor of Star City was a glaringly implausible exception to this trend), Laurel Kent, as a historical researcher, voluntarily deals with non-super colleagues every day. Unlike most of her fellow hangers-on of the Legion of Super-Heroes, particularly the Legion of Substitute Heroes and ex-members like Bouncing Boy and Duo Damsel, who appear to spend most of their time waiting in the wings for some emergency so dire even they will be needed, Laurel has looked at her situation realistically and realized that for her, at least, working with the Legion cannot be the only prupose of life.

This demonstrates a clear-headedness uncommon among super-heroines, many of whom have virtually no purpose in life or even motive for being superheroines. Perhaps the most flagrant instances of this are Ms. Marvel, who didn't even want to be a superhero and whose original life as Carol Danvers was more appealing than anything she managed to do as a heroine for at least 20 issues, by Marvel's own admission, and Spider-Woman, who spent her first 8 issues avenging her father's death because she had nothing else to do, fighting crime on the side even as her scripter insisted that she didn't think of herself as a superheroine. Not to mention those heroines who do have motives for taking up crimefighting, but ones so bizarre that they could never occur in a male hero, such as the "daddy's girls," Shooter's 1975 Night Girl and Gerry Conway's Black Canary in the 1977 "origin story" and recent issues of WORLD'S FINEST.

Perhaps most interesting of all, Laurel is more well-adjusted than even many real-life people. I refer specifically to actual descendants of famous people in real life, who often appear to do nothing at all constructive themselves, relying on their ancestors' accomplishments to justify their own existence. For instance, it's difficult to think of even one child of John or Robert Kennedy who appears to have any goal in life beyond simply being a Kennedy. Being the descendant of the most famous superhero who ever lived has more potential for turning one's head than even being related to a president, but Laurel Kent seems to be far more down-to-earth than many of her fellow Legion part-timers who do not have this problem in addition to the problem of being minor superheroes themselves.

Finally, in contrast to the prevailing tendency for superheroines to be half-liberated misfits, unable to function properly either as heroes or as women, Paul Levitz's Laurel Kent has both a job -- perhaps two jobs -- and a boyfriend, and seems to be able to handle both quite well. In this she is distinctly unlike better-known heroines such as Wonder Woman, Spider-Woman, and Ms. Marvel, or even Shooter's Night Girl, who are constantly forced to make choices between having satisfying relationships with men and doing their job as superheroines, with the frequent result of not doing either man or job full justice. Or heroines like Supergirl, who no longer have either a man/job conflict or a social life.

Freud defined a successful human being as one who is able to fulfill the two prime human needs -- to love and to work. It seems significant that it should be necessary to sift through all the first, second, and third rank heroines, and on down the line to minor superwomen who have been portrayed as basically supporting characters, before finding one female superhero who is able to love without neglecting her work and work without forfeiting love. The only heroine besides Laurel Kent that I am able to think of who fits this definition is Chris Claremont's detective heroine Misty Knight, of IRON FIST, currently appearing in X-MEN. Curiously, like Laurel, with her old crush on her own ancestor and her potentially overwhelming family background, Misty also has even more difficulties to overcome than the average hero or heroine. In Misty's case, these difficulties include having lost an arm to a terrorist bomb, a trauma that she does not feel is compensated for by the superior strength of the bionic arm she was given as a substitue, and the fact that she is black and Iron Fist, the man she loves, is white. Although this interracial romance has apparently not caused any problems for the characters in the comic (or, according to Claremont, with the Marvel management backstage, to their credit), it surely would in real life.

It is fascinating, and a bit disturbing, that only comics heroines with obivous potential for maladjustment seem to be able to make the transition from troubled female to fully functioning human being, while superwomen who seem closer on the surface to the norm of the average person -- and/or some ideal of "femininity" and womanhood -- never manage to transcend their various inner and outer conflicts and personality problems. What is even more disturbing is the conclusions this suggests; that in comics, "normal" women are more the exception to the norm than "abnormal" women, that a woman has to be exceptional in some rather undesirable way in order to become a real success, and that most comics writers subconsciously regard it as virtually impossible for a heroine -- or any woman, especially a woman who seems to fit the traditional female standards -- to be a human being able to function successfully in all necessary areas of life.

LEGION LIGHTWEIGHT

by Robert A. Rusk

Light Lass joined the Legion originally as Lightning Lass, taking the place of her dead brother Lightning Lad. When her brother was brought back to life, Light Lass took a back seat, and because the Legion code doesn't allow duplication of powers (except in special cases, i.e., Superboy, Supergirl, Mon-El, and Ultra Boy) was subject to expulsion. Realistically, Lightning Lad should never have been readmitted. In order to sidestep the entire issue, however, Lightning Lass found her powers altered somewhat against her will.

She became known as Light Lass, with the ability to make things super-light. The male chauvinist attitudes prevalent at the time dictated that she, and not her brother, would have her powers changed. She is now one of the weakest, and least utilized, members of the Legion.

As I see it, there are only two basic solutions; one, get rid of her altogether, or two, make her a more viable member of the Legion. Leaving things the way they are is not a solution -- that's the problem! Consider, then, these two alternatives.

The first, getting rid of LL, I see in three ways; 1) have her killed, 2) have her lose her powers, or 3) just have her retire from the Legion. All three contain the potential for great stories, but since the glimpses we've had of the Legion's future (or as some say, only of their possible future) have not shown Light Lass to have died in action, that line would require some very masterful plotting, and, even if successfully done, would probably still receive dubious acceptance.

The greatest shortcoming of getting rid of her is the 2-to-1

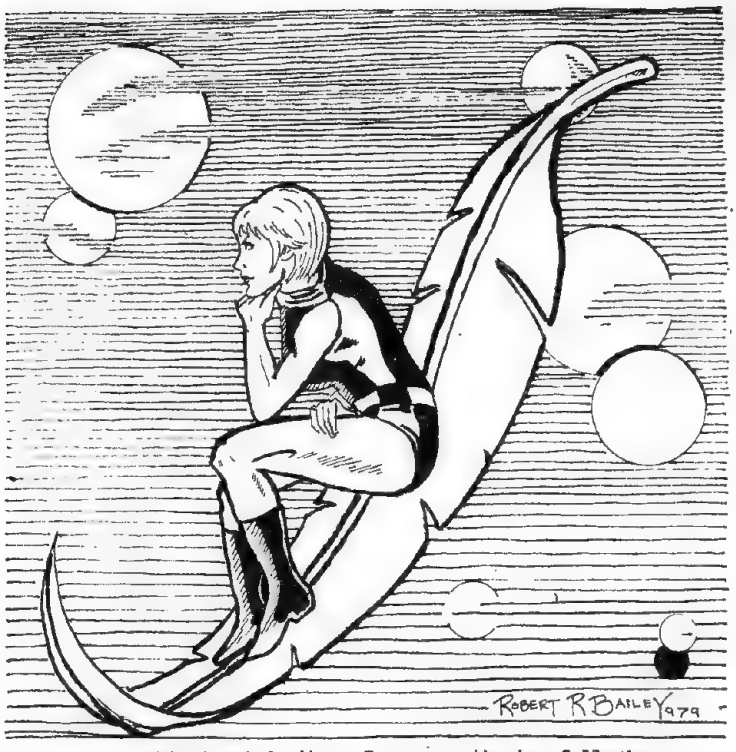
ratio of males over females. Considering current trends and standards, this is rather shaky ground. Given: 1) women's liberation, 2) the current population has a higher percentage of females to males, and 3) the largest percentage of the world's wealth is in the hands of women, is it likely that the Legion would be structured this way?

True, there is a thousand-year gap between now and then, and, while these facts are valid for Earth-Real, they may not be true for Earth-1. Yet without information to the contrary, this would seem to be the case.

The second solution, that of making Light Lass a more viable member, is the better one.

Several reasons for keeping her in the Legion have already been mentioned as counterpoints for her leaving the Legion. I'll add just a few others: 1) she and Lightning Lad are the only related members, 2) a "new" member can be added without actually losing another one, and 3) I personally like Light Lass. With this in mind, then, I propose the two following possible changes.

A new costume for Light Lass -- or is it Lethal Lass? -- by Chris Abell. The leotard, gloves & boots are pastel blue with a white central panel on the leotard, white stripes and arrows on gloves and boots. White cape and gold chain belt.



LIGHT LASS -- Mistress of Light! Her multi-hued rays of light affect moods and emotions in others; her ablity to bend light rays around her renders her invisible; she can cause a brilliant burst of sun-bright light to blind her foes; and the raw power of deadly laser beams are also hers to command.

LETHAL LASS -- whose deadly touch can disintegrate matter! With but the briefest of touches, she can disintegrate any and all matter up to ten feet from point of contact, or she can selectively disintegrate any given substance without affecting others around it. Since this last requires a great amount of concentration and personal energy, it is only used in extreme emergency.

The new Light Lass is the more logical solution, but for my money, I prefer Lethal Lass because she has more raw power. This is something too long absent from the original concept of Lightning Lass, and indeed from any of the female Legionnaires. It's time that this weak-kneed-female approach was stopped at DC, and the Legion is as good a place to start corrective action as anywhere!

EDGE OF ENDING

by Chris Polk

One of the basics of comic book science fiction is the idea of the glory of the future. With science as God and scientist as Savior, everything will be all right. But in the last few issues of SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES this ideal is beginning to be shattered. One of the reasons for writing this article is to show why we should accept this, and why we should abandon some of our unfounded faith in the future.

The Thirtieth Century of SUPERBOY/LSH is no utopia. The Legion's existence presupposes this. One needs no cops in Eden. In fact, in many ways it is no different from the life we lead today, or the one our ancestors lead. It is a world of ignorance, stupidity, violence, and pain. Why?

Problems originate from two main causes; humanity and technology. Since humanity creates and controls technology, it is all one cause, but let's assume two causes. Which is causing the problems of the Thirtieth Century?

Technology: the universe of the Legion is a multi-levelled existence, as is our own. While this article can be typed, photographed and sent to all sections of the U.S., people in the less developed nations can't even write. Thus it is with the Legion's universe. Planets like Earth and Colu can send persons throughout the galaxies with ease. They can create entire worlds, like Weber's World, or destroy complete planets. Yet there are worlds which are more backward, less developed. They are far below the Legion's sophistication; wild, primitive -- some even as bad as New York in 1979! The United Planets has seen fit not to share its technology with them, much as we do with the Third World. Motive? Later.

The Legion's time doesn't have the technological problems of our time. Whatever their source of power, it is seemingly endless and not an ecological problem. While they do have nuclear reactors (witness the creation of Sun Boy), they are probably relics, too dangerous to use on developed planets, only something to give the peasants to play with.

The resources of the planets are seemingly limitless. With the U.P. probably following the lead of the British imperialists of the 19th Century and the Americans of today, they rob the less

developed, leaving only tokens behind.

What's that you say? The U.P. wouldn't do that? People have changed in ten centuries? Bull! Are we any less violent or savage than the Britons of one thousand years ago? Man hasn't really changed. Man will not change in the next thousand years either, unless we kill each other off. As H.G. Wells said in LIBERTY MAGAZINE (October 17, 1931):

> Gladly would the prophet prophesy pleasant things. But his duty is to tell what he sees. He sees a world still firmly controlled by soldiers, patriots, usurpers, and financial adventurers, a world surrendered to suspicion and hatred, losing what is left of private liberties very rapidly, blundering toward bitter class conflicts, and preparing for new wars.

Thus it is with the Legion's universe. To be fair, these things I talk about are based on what is written today, with our many prejudices. Perhaps they shall not exist in that far-off day. More probably, they will. A brief catalog:

SEXISM: At the end of Jim Shooter's brilliantly-written battle of the Legion vs. Mordru in ADVENTURE 369-370, we have Mon-El saying, "Well I'll be darned! To think of all the trouble we had dodging Mordru! How ironic that he was foiled by three girls!" Ironic? Just three GIRLS? Good grief, these are three of the most powerful beings in the universe! The White Witch is even more powerful than Mon-El! Yet, they are just "three girls."

VIOLENCE AND CRIME: Granted that v&c are the basis for comics, pick up any old Legion issue. Is the 30th Century any better than our own in this case?

PRISONS: In this primitive age, Holland is thinking of abolishing prisons. Yet they still exist in 2979, and even cause the dath of Charma (S/LSH #240).

POVERTY: Slums in Metropolis 2979? Yep! Even the parents of Matter-Eater Lad had lived in them.

Got the picture? In an age where anything is possible, the reality is still bad. Are the people in charge evil? No, not any more than ol' boy Jimmy C. is evil. It's just that humanity doesn't change.

But things are going from bad to worse. For the past two years the Legion's universe has been rocked with political disaster. The Khunds stand like the Khans before ancient Europe. The U.P. has to sit down as equals with the Dominators.

Maybe there's a twenty-year curse on heroes. Like the one in which every twenty years the elected President dies (Harrison, Lincoln, Garfield, McKinley, Harding, Roosevelt, Kennedy...think about it, especially with the '80 elections coming up). After twenty or so years, Earth-1 is in decline. This is the Legion's twentieth year, so...?

Whatever the cause, it is falling apart. The U.P. is crumbling. Imsk (Shrinking Violet's home) is threatening secession for either mining or hunting rights. The Earth (why always Earth?) is attacked by the Khunds, Dark Circle, and Mordru within a few months.

The Legion itself is tearing apart. Wildfire, a dominant leader who took diplomacy lessons from Idi Amin, is doing what Regulus, Time Trapper, and dozens of others failed at. He's destroying the Legion. The Legionnaires are now acting independently of leadership. Brainiac 5 doesn't even ask Deputy Element Lad's advice before setting out in S/LSH 241. Perhaps the others know who the true leaders are, even if the fans don't.

Even the government is tired of the Legion. Beginning with the tax issue, the government is trying to curb a powerful and semi-popular group from taking its power away. Wildfire didn't help matters with his arrogance on Weber's World, either.

Is the time of the Legion, the future, really bleak? Probably. As Wells said, "...It is as if I was watching a dark curtain fall steadily, fold after fold, across the bright spectacle of hope with which the century dawned."

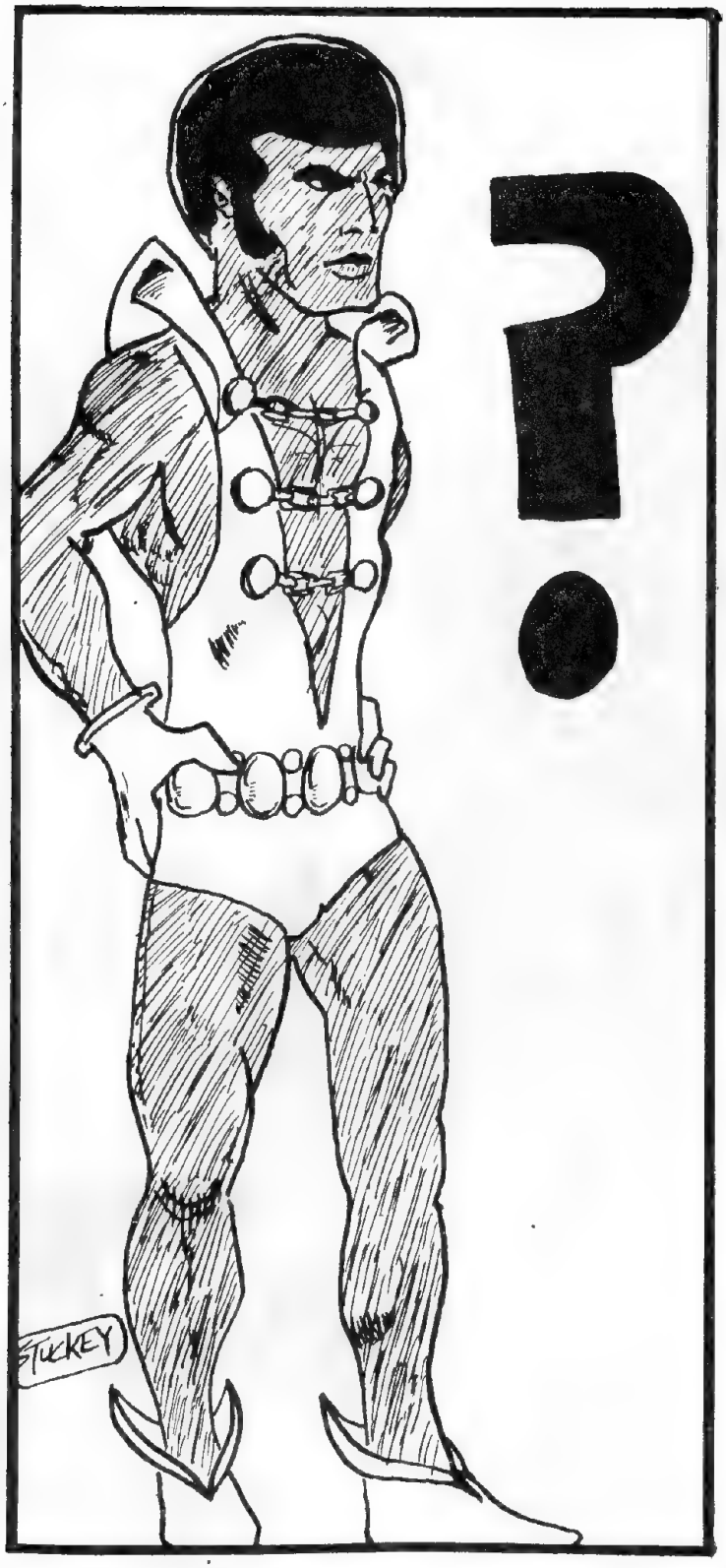
It will be some time before the veneer of civilization rubs thin and man returns to barbarism. It is only Act III, scene 4; a little while left till final curtain.

The New Invisible Kid

by Strick

What would you say of a Legionnaire who has only been seen three times (with two cameos) in over forty issues? No, it's a full-fledged Legionnaire, not Honorary or Reservist. And no, it isn't Invisible Kid! Give up? It's none other than that new invisible kid, Tyroc!

Among the thirty- or forty-odd Legionnaires, Subs, and other heroes associated with the club, Tyroc has the rather shaky position of being the only black. This might not be so odd in a universe full of humanoids, but the Legion's universe has a healthy percentage of humans in its population, and the Legion's membership is or has been once in their lives, 100% human, excluding Chameleon Boy. Of those humans only three (Brainiac 5, Shadow Lass, Dawnstar, and maybe Wildfire) are non-white; all have the traditional white features.



The non-pink or -human members have all had their reasons for being so: Chameleon Boy was to add an alien to the then-small group, Brainiac 5 was the classic touch of irony in Mort Weisinger's Superman family of comics, Ferro Lad was a human mutant, thus his power and misshapen face, Karate Kid's half-Oriental heritage was a background for his power, Dawnstar is an ethnic cliche, tied to her power. As for Shadow Lass, her origin as a character is very interesting, as told by George (Blackwolf) Vincent in THE LEGION OUTPOST #1 (June, '72):

> .../Mike Bickford and I/ came up with the idea of a girl who would be a black and had the power to create darkness. She would be a mutant born on a planet that was colonized by blacks following the racial wars of the 1990's that swept through Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas. Mort Weisinger, the now-departed editor of the Legion, said the concept was too controversial for comics to handle. (And he gave no thought to trying to improve the junk-image of comics.) However, Shadow Lass interested him, and he said he's consider using an altered version of her.
>
> ...Time passed, and soon an Adult Legion story appeared... and in the hall of dead Legionnaires...along with Ferro Lad and the yet-to-be-introduced Reflecto was a Caucasian Shadow Woman... I wrote Mr. W. about this and he said he'd correct the coloring; when she was introduced she was blue...

So blacks were too controversial for comics. By 1976, it seems, they were not, for in SATLSH #216 Cary Bates, Mike Grell and Murray Boltinoff introduced a hostile black character from the island-city of Marzal, an independent, self-sufficient metropolis on Earth that was composed of an entirely black population that wanted nothing to do with the outside world. It seems that Marzal had suffered through several calamities, and neither the Legion nor anyone else offered to help. From this Tyroc gots the idea that the Legion is racist, an idea he shelved after a holier-than-thou lecture from the Legionnaires at the end of the story. Yet the Legion offered no explanation of why no aid was given to the Marzals.

It is this blatant lecture, this lack of explanation that makes the Legion appear to be exactly what they say they aren't: racist. It is a plot device that was horribly mangled by Cary Bates. The Legionnaires should have said, "Hey, bub, you're crazy!" when Tyroc charged them with racism, and then explained that they were all off putting out a nova or something, and couldn't spare anyone for Earth. Instead we are left with a quick, assured membership for Tyroc, as if the Legion hastily decided that they did need a token for appearances' sake.

With the "of course we aren't racist!" theme still predominating, Tyroc starred in his second issue, #218, a typical plotline as a test is given a new member. Although usually the tests have arisen out of circumstances, this was an unusual case: a test given by the Legionnaires themselves, as if Tyroc weren't good enough to face a real crisis yet. It is as though the Legion were doing preliminary testing on a potential member, but the fact that Tyroc is already a member merely points to the hastiness of his induction.

In issue #222 Tyroc's newness is explited well in a plotline which utilizes the unfamiliarity of the readers with him to make it appear as if he is a traitor to the Legion. There is no problem with the plotline except that the false role associates Tyroc even more with the aspect of hostility, minimizing reader identification.

With the end of #222, let me say a few words about Tyroc's costume: it is a typical Grellish job. Mike Grell has designed it, as usual, to reveal as much skin as the Comics Code will allow, and makes it a rather bland white. He loves to use chains with his characters, but on Tyroc the chains suddenly become something bevond just an S&M symbol; they become the symbols of slavery. The short, white gloves are reminiscent of minstrel shows -- in all, a terrible costume to put on a black character.

It must have been the combination of racist elements in both story and costume, of the character mishandling that made Tyroc an uninteresting if not hostile person, a person readers could not identify with, that were the reasons that from issue #222 on, Tyroc was never seen. Oh, in the Legion Tabloid (a story which had to take place in a parallel universe, and not on Earth-1), Tyroc got to take care of the Legion Clubhouse while the rest of the gang went off on Missions, and in #250, he got to speak an entire line -- before he was relegated to taking care of the Clubhouse. A few times he has been referred to as being on leave to help out in Marzal as the island-city joins modern society. By his very absence, the basic racist, tokenistic idea behind Tyroc stands out, leaving a bad taste in readers' mouths. When he was writing the feature, Paul Levitz admitted that he hated Tyroc so much that he'd never use him. Paul wanted to kill Tyroc in the Earthwar saga, but luckily he didn't -- can you imagine what the Legion would be like with this stain on their record?

The answer, of course, is to USE Tyroc, to build a likeable personality for him, create a background for Marzal, explain the Legion's absence during Marzal's crises, define Tyroc's powers. Indeed, his powers are puzzling, for at first glance, they appear to be sonic in nature, a la Black Canary or Banshee (making Tyroc fit in with the "loud-mouth black" cliche?), but they are only secondary manefestations, for his yells bend the laws of physics; they are not a power in themselves. This has led Legion fan Tom Mitchell to wonder if Zatanna might be Tyroc's ancestor, making Tyroc's yells a backwards version of Marzalese,

(cont. on p. 29)

The X
OLD
AND
NEW
-Ken Meyer Jr. '91 hoohaa!

the Princess and the Professor

by Kat Nickell

The X-MEN comic has introduced an older, more mature superhero team to the reading public. However, the innovative use of new female types has usually been overlooked in most analyses of the team. Readers have complained of the lack of older (at least over 25) females in the comics. None of the females in the X-Men is a "sweet young thing," especially the two women who are the strongest women characters in the X-MEN cast: Princess Lilandra Neramani, ex-admiral of the Imperial Fleet, and Professor Moira MacTaggert.

To have reached the rank of commander, Lilandra must have served on different ships for several years. When she was introduced, she had been skillfully evading Imperial ships across many light-years. Her skill discounts any idea that nepotism accounts for her command rank. To divide the loyalties of the Imperial Fleet, she must have commanded great admiration and respect -- far greater than the respect given to a commander who has achieved rank through nepotism. Although she was defeated militarily, Lilandra was determined to avert universal disaster. By contacting Xavier and the X-Men, she was able to prevent D'Ken's attempt to release the annihilative power of the M'Kraan crystal.

Since she has been temporarily exiled to Earth, and then returned to her empire, Lilandra has been exploring her relationship with Xavier. She shared his doubts concerning the choices which both of them must make now that she is recalled from exile. Until #117, they had appeared only in vignettes, which only hinted at their debates concerning their relationship. These doubts have returned now that Xavier has realized that Jean may endanger herself -- and the universe -- as Phoenix. Fortunately, throughout their relationship, Lilandra has considered her decisions as an adult. The decision to return as Empress was made after careful consideration. She has never behaved as some child whose infatuation rules her reason; she is a seasoned politician and military commander who has worked hard for the position she has achieved. It was very improbable that she would sacrifice it in order to remain on a back-water planet like Earth, no matter how she feels about Xavier. Now that he has returned to Earth, she must make another decision of even greater magnitude than before -- whether to reign as Empress or to forsake her Empire and be at Charles' side. It would seem that a compromise is improbable this time.

Although Lilandra's true age is unknown, the age of Professor Moira MacTaggert is easier to guess. Moira has achieved a full professorship at the University of Edinburgh. Unless she was a child prodigy, she must be in her mid-to-late thirties. Since she and Xavier are contemporaries (Moira is probably not more than five years his junior), Moira must be almost as old as Xavier. In FOOM #10, Stan Lee describes Xavier as approximately thirty-five in 1962. Allowing for the differences in "real time" and "comic book time," Xavier has perhaps aged five to ten years, making him in his early to middle forties. Moira isn't much younger than he is. If she isn't at least thirty, her acquisition of a full professorship seems less realistic. (Of course, Moira could be older; my estimation doesn't include a possible hiatus in her career when she was married or the time used to establish her laboratory -- an event which might have occurred simultaneously with the formation of the old X-Men.)

Moira's decisions about her relationships with Xavier and Sean Cassidy parallel the process that Lilandra used while making her decisions over her own relationship with Xavier. Although she and Xavier had been deeply in love and (possibly) shared the dream of a joint establishment of what is now her laboratory for genetic research. However, after Xavier was drafted to go to Korea, Moira -- for some unstated reason -- decided their relationship was unworkable (#97, 113, & 117). Perhaps their professional interests revived the severed relationship because, years later, the closeness remained. When Xavier feared he was going mad and asked Moira for help, she immediately responded (#96).

Her relationship with Xavier has influenced her involvement with Banshee. Sean Cassidy is encouraging a faster development of her relationship with him (before Moira left for Scotland in #110). However, Moira has seemed uncertain. She has refused to make a definite commitment, and has returned to her island without making any promises to return or to renew her relationship with Sean. With Sean's impending retirement from the X-Men, though, little doubt remains as to how their story will end -- especially in the light of Moira's recent widowing.

So far, this discussion has been limited to the two oldest women in the X-Men cast. Nevertheless, the younger women are not "sweet young things." Storm and Phoenix are older than any of the old X-Men when they joined the team. Ororo is at least twenty-seven years old (#102); she has had many extremely varied experiences (to say the least). Ororo lived on the streets as a beggar-thief for approximately 4-8 years before she wandered to Kenya, where she remained as a "goddess" for approximately 12 - 15 years. Ororo's relationships with her teammates show a very mature appraisal of herself and of them. Her refusal to establish any romantic relationships may be caused by her determination to understand Western culture before committing herself. Perhaps Ororo, who obviously enjoys the attention and companionship of men, does not feel the necessity of defining her identity through a romantic attachment.

In contrast, many of Phoenix's problems in the past have been caused by her belief that a girl must attach herself to a

male. When she was younger, Jean Grey underwent all the emotional traumas of a "typical American girl," having crushes on every member of the team, encouraging rivalries for her attentions (although this seems to be unconscious), etc. Jean, who is approximately twenty-two, was only beginning to stabilize her relationship with Scott when she was transformed into Phoenix. During their temporary separation (#94 - 98), Jean had a chance to analyse her feelings for Scott. She decided that she did love him -- and this time, it was no school-girl infatuation.

Her transformation, however, has forced them to reassess their relationship. Although Jean's feelings for Scott seem to be unchanged, Scot has become uncertain about what he felt since he believed Jean was dead; he even began a relationship with Colleen Wing. Ororo suggests that, unlike Jean, he has not matured emotionally. Either Scott must learn to accept Jean as Phoenix (who no longer needs his constant protection), or he should admit that his "love" was merely a continuation of his crush on Marvel Girl (who did need his protection). Perhaps, Ororo implies, Scott cannot accept a Jean Grey who has matured into a woman (and into a full-fledged hero).

Only future issues of the X-Men will show what decisions these women will make concerning their relationships with others.

Nevertheless, the development of the personalities of these women show an emphasis on more mature women. Even with the arrival of young Ariel soon, we may expect this mature treatment to continue. Compared to most women in comics, the women in the X-Men are remarkably liberated. Despite emotional pressures, none of them have reacted like the hysterical women in traditional literature. When they need to be saved, their perils are as real as those of the men. In other words, if the situations were reversed, the danger would not seem ridiculous. Chivalric rescues are minimal; when these women place themselves in danger, the danger has not been caused by their own carelessness. A possible exception is Ororo's claustrophobia; however, her fear has been motivated (#102). It is not a convenient excuse to cry for help; in fact, Ororo is learning to cope with her phobia. In #110 and 114, Ororo is placed in a claustrophobic situation, but she does not panic, despite her terror.

Lilandra, Moira, Ororo, and Jean -- all are brave, mature women who are able to make independent decisions -- whether it concerns a battle or an emotional encounter. Each woman is a major character in her own right, equal in importance to any of her male companions. Their unstereotyped personalities are refreshing to any reader. Truly a more extraordinary cast of women has never been assembled previously in any comic.

AN OUTLINE OF X-MEN HISTORY

PART 2

by Robert Sodaro

(When last we left the X-Men, the year was 1970, and their book had just been cancelled! However, they popped up occasionally in other books...)

The first such appearance was in December of 1970 (KA-ZAR #2, old series). The Angel went solo for a few months in a fight against the Dazzler. During the course of this fight Warren's father died. This brief public appearance went till April of '71 (MARVEL TALES #30). Thus the entire run of this series was in KA-ZAR #'s 2-3 and MARVEL TALES #30.

The next X-Man who re-entered the public was Iceman (SPIDER-MAN #92), in January of the same year. Later that year Prof X showed up to help Reed Richards in one of his many attempts to cure the Hulk (AVENGERS #88); this was in May.

In March of 1972 the Beast made his solo appearance, albeit in a slightly altered form (AMAZING ADVENTURES 11 - 18). He was the first X-Man to formally leave the X-Men. He then joined Brand Corp. to help find the chemical cause of mutation. He succeeded, and used the formula to temporarily mutate himself, only to find his temporary condition had become a permanent one. While he was in this new form, that of a mutated mutant, he met Iron Man; while under the influence of the Mastermind, he joined Unis and the Blob to form the New Brotherhood of Evil Mutants. He then regained his proper state of mind and defeated them. After this he fought and beat Quasimodo.

Yet while the Beast was running around Brand Corp. Havok and Lorna met the Hulk in the Midwest (HULK #150) in April. In August came the return of the Sentinels. This time they were defeated by the Avengers (AVENGERS #102-3). In September while the Avengers were fighting the Sentinels, the X-Men met both Spider-Man and Morbius (MARVEL TEAM-UP #4), after which Morbius escaped from the X-Men's care (VAMPIRE TALES #1).

In November the Avengers, looking for Quicksilver, met the Beast Brood, and began to find out what had happened to the X-Men (AVENGERS #104). Yet they were still around, for that very month the Angel sought and found the Beast. He discovered the Beast's condition and helped him fight off the Griffin. It was also at this time that the Beast's fur changed from grey to blue, and when he made his deal with Patsy Walker Baxter that later changed her into the Hellcat (AVENGERS #144).

Also that October the Beast travelled to Rutland, VT, with his old girlfriend Vera. There he fought the Juggernaut, then went to Canada to try and cure the Mimic (HULK #161).

During 1973 the X-Men returned to fight as a team. The only problem to this was that they had been possessed by a new power of Magneto and fought for him. Luckily the Avengers were able to put the kibosh on Magneto's plans and release the X-Men from his control (AVENGERS #'s 110-1). After this fight the X-Men

discovered that Angel was among the missing so they began a search for him. Prof X talked to Shanna the She-Devil in August (Shanna #5) about her problems with the Mandrill and Nekra.

The year of 1974 saw even more appearances of the X-Men. In February Marvel Girl, Cyclops, and Prof X captured the Juggernaut, who had just been beaten by the Hulk (HULK #172). Then in April the mystery of the missing mutants was resolved. The three remaining X-Men met Captain America and the Falcon. (CA & F #'s 171-5). They discovered the the Secret Empire was the group kidnapping all the mutants. Shortly after this episode Iceman fought the Human Torch to a standstill (MARVEL TEAM-UP #23), then fought with him to beat Equinox.

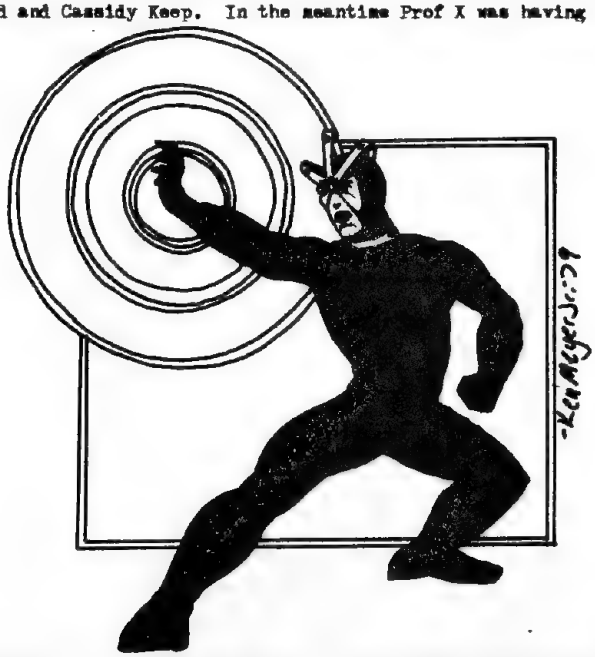
Prof X showed up in September by the side of the Defenders, claiming that the X-Men were on a secret mission (DEFENDERS #15-6).

The last individual appearance of an X-Man was in February when Prof X helped the Fantastic Four to subdue a rogue Jamie Madrox (G-S FF #4). Then in June the X-Men went to the South Sea island Krakoa to find a mysterious menace, only to fall captive to the island itself. That is when Prof X went to search for the new X-Men (G-S X-MEN #1). Upon their return to safety all the old X-Men save for Cyclops left the group (X-MEN #94, the first all-new episode in five years). In July the Beast joined the Avengers (AVENGERS #137) and later teamed up with Spider-Man to defeat the Griffin (M T-U #38). In October the Angel and Iceman co-formed the Champions with Hercules, Black Widow, and Ghost Rider. (Note: Angel's mother had died just previously to this, so he went public with his dual identity.)

A brief outline of Champion history goes as follows: they fought Pluto in '75; Rampage, Darkstar (who later joined), Titanium Man, and the Crimson Dynamo (aka Yuri Ivanovitch, the Black Widow's aide-de-camp, Ivan's, son), in '76; Warlord Kaa and the Shadow People (with Hawkeye, Two-Gun Kid, and Black Goliath), the Stinger, Kamo Tharn, Swarm, Magneto, and Dr. Doom in '77; and rogue Sentinels under the command of the Vansher in January of '78, when they finally broke up (CHAMPIONS #16). Angel teamed briefly with Spider-Man in April to stop Iceman, who was being controlled by Rampage (PPTSS #17-8). The recovered Iceman and Angel, along with the Hulk, fought and beat the Master Mold/Steven Lang in HULK ANNUAL #7. The Champions also appeared in IRON MAN ANNUAL #4 and GODZILLA #3, both in '77.

New X-Men history continues in 1975, when in their second outting Thunderbird died at the hands of Count Nefaria (#95). Then in late '75 Marvel Girl returned to the fold as Havok and Lorna Dane (now Polaris), under the control of a new Eric the Red, fought the new X-Men. At Christmas time the new Sentinels, under the direction of Steven Lang, attacked the X-Men. The X-Men faired well and destroyed the Lang Sentinels, who were using the SHIELD orbital platform as a base; the mutants returned to Earth. Their return flight was through the worst solar storm in history; Marvel Girl, who was piloting the craft, died and brought herself back to life as Phoenix (#'s 98-101).

While she was recovering, the X-Men, save for Cyclops, headed for Ireland and Cassidy Keep. In the meantime Prof X was having a



continual nightmare which was the result of a mindlock-type contact from Princess Lilandra, who made contact with Xavier during the Z'Nox invasion (#107). At Cassidy Keep the X-Men were attacked by Black Tom Cassidy, Banshee's cousin, and the Juggernaut. And if this weren't enough -- Magneto returned! (#104)

Revived by Eric the Red from his childhood state (which Alpha placed him, Unis, the Blob, Mastermind, and Lorelei in in DEFENDERS #16), Magneto attacked the new X-Men for the first time. He managed to defeat them all when Cyclops showed up and forced the X-Men into a strategic retreat. (Note: the other three mutants reduced to infancy with Magneto were also restored to adulthood by Eric's ray. See CHAMPIONS #17).

Firelord, unwittingly enlisted by Eric, attacked the X-Men only to be fought to a standstill by Phoenix. While they fought, Eric kidnapped Lilandra and transported the two to the far side of the galaxy, where their empire is located. The X-Men followed through the power of Phoenix and there they helped defeat the crazed emperor, Lilandra's brother, and his elite guard, who bore a remarkable resemblance to a certain group, you might even say LEGION, of super-heroes! It was there that they also met the Starjammers. To Phoenix's dismay she discovered that their leader, Corsair, was in fact Major Christopher Summers, Scott and Alex's father! Again it was through Phoenix's powers that the day was saved.

After the battle Corsair asked Phoenix not to tell Scott about him; then he took his leave. Upon returning to Earth the X-Men and Lilandra had a party at Jean's apartment. There the X-Men met Iron Fist, whose lover, Misty Knight, shared the place with Jean. The X-Men jumped to conclusions and attacked. Jean and Scott returned in time to stop the fight and invite Iron Fist to join their soiree. (IRON FIST #15)

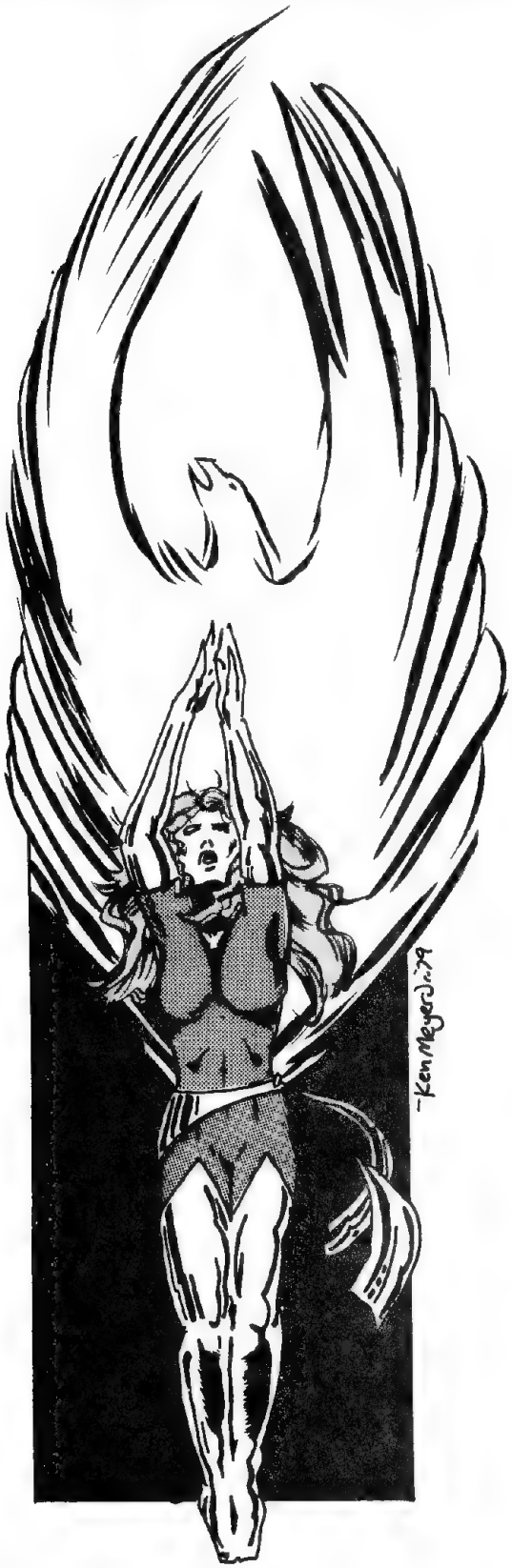
When they returned to their Westchester headquarters Wolverine was attacked by Weapon Alpha of the Canadian government in an attempt to make him return to Canada. After Moira, injured in that battle, recovered, the X-Men were attacked by Warhawk (#110). He, too, met defeat at the hands of the mutants.

When Havok and Polaris, living at Moira's Mutant Research Center with Jamie Madrox, were attacked by the Living Pharaoh's mob, Havok was brought to New York and Polaris was left for dead. Havok was freed by Spider-Man and Thor who also took care of the Pharaoh/Monolith (M T-U #'s 69-70). (Note: sometime after Jean became Phoenix and before Wolverine was attacked by Weapon Alpha, Nightcrawler teamed up with Spider-Man (SPIDER-MAN #'s 161-2).) Also the entire team got together with the wall-crawler in MARVEL TEAM-UP ANNUAL #1 and M T-U #53. More likely this happened either right after X-Men 101, which is not very likely though it is probably right, or between issues # 109 and 111.

At this writing, it is 1978. For the first time since '69 (#58) not counting flashbacks in ish #60, or AVENGERS #102, nor his brief appearance in CAPTAIN AMERICA #174, where he was unconscious, Mesmero reappeared. He robbed all the X-Men of their memories and placed them in a carnival as freaks. Then the Beast

arrived to find them; he had been alerted to their disappearance by Polaris (M T-U #60). Wolverine was the first to break the mindlock. He then freed Jean, who freed the rest. The X-Men rushed Mesmero in force only to find him already totalled by Magneto.

Magneto, who had just returned from involvements with Captain America (CA ANNUAL #4), Dr. Doom, the Avengers, and Champions (S-V T-U #14 and CHAMPIONS #16), bested the X-Men without even trying. He placed them in a chamber in his Antarctica base which gave them only the physical powers of a six-month-old child. Magneto returned to his space station (abandoned in #5) to begin some new plans for world conquest. He began these plans by attacking several military bases on the continent of Austalia.



Yet the Austalian government was unable to fathom the motivation behind his attacks. Meanwhile Prof X was unaware of all this as he and Princess Lilandra had gone to the island of Kirinos, to recuperate. Yet he worried that he had lost telepathic rapport with the X-Men.

The mutants managed to free themselves from Magneto's prison. This was done by the efforts of Storm, who in her younger days in Cairo was one of the best thieves in the city. Once free they sabotaged Magneto's base so that he had to return to find out what the disturbance was. There the X-Men took him by surprise and managed to coalesque into a team for the very first time. Yet in defeating Magneto, they also almost managed to kill themselves.

The Antarctic citadel was vitally damaged in the brawl, causing the magma to flood the entire complex. In the resulting flight for freedom it became everyone for themselves; Magneto departed (barely) under his own power, while Jean and Hank were able to make it to the surface. The rest of the X-Men, however, had to tunnel down and out, whereupon they reached the Savage Land (#114). To be sure, all the survivors think that the others are dead.

Hank and Jean were rescued by a US Navy helecopter and returned to civilization, there to bring Xavier the bad news. His "children" were dead. This was the point that the X-Men were officially disbanded, for Hank returned to the Avengers (AVENGERS #178), Jean headed for the Isle of Kirinos (#117), and Xavier and Lilandra returned to her Empire (#118).

A short time before this, in the Savage Land, the rest of the X-Men, Cyclops, Wolverine, Nightcrawler, Storm, Banshee, and Colossus , met up with Sauron. As it turned out, though Karl Lykos was not really intent on revenging himself on the X-Men (see #'s 60-61), he was suffering from a temporary breakdown. All the energy radiated by the mutants drove him to an unvoluntary reversion to Sauron. It was Ka-Zar who stayed the X-Men's hand from injuring Lykos. Then both Ka-Zar and Lykos related the following tale: Lykos did not die in his fall those years before, but managed to climb down to the Savage Land and eventually come to terms with his power. He discovered Zaladane, a priestess, and her "god" Garokk were attempting to "right the wrongs in the Savage Land." In the process they would destroy all that stood in their path, including the Savage Land itself! Their first act was to destroy the alien temple in the Savage Land. This temple was there due to an interdimentional warp (see KA-ZAR #20).

Cyclops had wanted to return to civilization first, then return to help Ka-Zar, but the way out of the Savage Land was blocked by an ice floe, so they decided to help Ka-Zar -- or there would have been no Savage Land to return to (#115). Together they defeated Zaladane and Garokk, and saved the Savage Land from becoming an arctic wasteland. They then attempted to return to civilization (#116).

Upon reaching the open sea they were rescued by a Japanese trawler. However, the trawler was under radio silence and the X-Men were required to remain with them till the ship reached Japan. During this time six weeks passed (117). These events, from Mesmero's attack to this time, took less than a month. In fact, it was only a few days from #111's attack to the destruction of Magneto's base, perhaps a week. Then another week passed while the X-Men were in the Savage Land (115-116).

Incidentally, while the X-Men were in the Savage Land, Scott began to remember some of his forgotten past. He began to remember his father and mother, and of course, Alex, but his concentration was disturbed by Storm's interruption. He had seemed to make a connection between himself and the Starjammer Corsair. He also found himself unable to mourn for Jean, while Wolverine (and Jean) were desolate.

It was now a week or so before Christmas (118) and the X-Men arrived in Japan, only to find themselves involved in yet another crisis. The Japanese island of Honshu was under attack and the X-Men flew into the breech. They first sought out Sunfire, as they had no passports, and they must reach Prof X, unaware that he had left for Lilandra's homeworld. At Sunfire's home they met Colleen Wing and Misty Knight who were on a case. Also it seems that Wolverine was beginning to fall for Sunfire's sister, Mariko. As it turned out, Logan was in Japan many years ago and could speak Japanese fluently.

Not all was fun and games, though, for Cyclops could not contact the professor, and the X-Men were attacked by the Mandroids (see AVENGERS #95). After a short fight they fell before the combined might of the X-Men and Sunfire, but the villain behind the Mandroids was revealed to be Moses Magnum (see G-S SPIDER-MAN #5 and POWERMAN ANNUAL #1). Moses, it seems, wished to conquer Japan. Yet the combined forces of all the heroes, namely the X-Men, Sunfire, and Nightwing Restorations, proved to be more than adequate. Thus Moses was defeated, with the only major injury being the over-wrought vocal cords of Banshee. Still, he recovered sufficiently in time to celebrate Christmas with his companions.

Meantime, Jean had just joined Moira MacTaggert, Jamie Madrox, Alex Summers, and Lorna Dane for Christmas in Ireland. Unbeknownst to them, Angus MacWhirter, whose hovercraft was destroyed by Magneto several months back (104) is seeking vengeance by attempting to blow up Moria's island. But while there alone, he is attacked by Mutant X (119). Thus the dangers and adventures of the X-Men go on...

Additional information has been revealed about the career of the X-Men, specifically Professor X. This information was published in X-MEN #117, and it proved some assumptions made on the part of this author wrong. Herein I willattempt to correct those assumptions.

It was before the Korean War when Charles Xavier and Moira MacTaggert (note the last name, indicating that Mrs. MacTaggert was married before she met Charles) first met and fell in love. They were everything for each other, but then Xavier was drafted. Shortly thereafter and for reasons unknown to him, Moira sent him a "Dear John" letter, thus breaking their engagement.

Xavier was discharged after the war and began to bum around the Mediterranean Sea, where he found the Isle ofKirinos. There he burned the psychic poison from his system. From there he went to Cairo, where he had his pocket picked by a young mutant thief, whom he later discovered to be Storm. He recovered his wallet and was attacked by an evil mutant named Amahl Farouk. The two of them had a duel to the death, which Xavier, obviously, won. It was at this time that he realized his life work, to find and train young mutants to protect humanity from evil mutants like Farouk.

From Cairo he travelled to Tibet, where he lost the use of his legs in a fight,to the alien Lucifer (#20). Eventually he returned home and formed the X-Men.

Comic Fan-atic Quiz

by Beverly Thon

1. When the president goes on nation-wide TV to announce that everyone on the planet Earth has made peace and are recycling all weapons into modernistic art sculptures, do you:
   A. Write the president a letter of commendation for a job well done.
   B. Write the president a letter of condemnation because the Incredible Hulk was pre-empted.

2. You've been lost in the wilderness for a whole month without food and are finally rescued. The first thing you do is:
   A. Crawl madly to your frig to see if your jalapeno bean dip and fritos are still there.
   B. Crawl madly to your mailbox to see if your Super Friends is still there.

3. Who do you list as next of kin on your job applications?
   A. parents, spouse, or kids
   B. Joker, the Thing, or Howard the Duck

4. Which do you consider the most newsworthy event?
   A. The world getting a new pope.
   B. Wonder Woman getting a new editor.

5. If there were only two newspapers left in the world, which would you choose?
   A. The World News because it had won every possible award for excellence in reporting.
   B. The Buzzard Puckey Utah Scandal Sheet because it carried "The World's Greatest Super Heroes" in the funnies.

6. Who is the first person you call in an emergency?
   A. a policeman
   B. a doctor
   C. the Answer Man

7. When you go to a fancy seafood restaurant for dinner, which do you do?
   A. Order the expensive Seafood Platter Special.
   B. Slap the waitress for serving Aquaman's friends to a bunch of cannibals.

8. You are on the verge of bankruptcy and a slave dealer offers to buy your family for a large amount of money. You would:
   A. Refuse because no amount of money is worth your loved ones.
   B. Refuse the money but offer to trade them for a Flash issue you missed because you did not have a subscription at the time.

9. Your cat is in need of an operation but you only have $6.75 to your name. However an altruistic vet offers to do it for that amount to save your dear kitty's life. You would:
   A. Gratefully give him the last of your bread.
   B. Send the money for a subscription to House of Mystery and use its brown wrapper to bury your cat in.

10. If you saw your neighbor's house on fire, which would you do?
   A. Call the fire department and go to help your neighbor.
   B. Run over there, steal his Superman comic that you need in your collection, and let the house burn so he won't know it's missing.

ANSWERS (do you really have to look?)
1-B, 2-B, 3-B, 4-B, 5-B, 6-C, 7-B, 8-B, 9-B, 10-B

SCORING: If you even got so much as one of these questions right, consider yourself a beyond-all-hope comic Fan-atic!

A Wonder Woman Chronology

by Al Schroeder III

Trying to establish a chronology for Wonder Woman's life is no easy task. The "switch in earths," the peculiar lack of aging in comic book characters, all make dates somewhat indeterminate. Yet a few facts emerge.

The Wonder Woman of Earth-2 first appeared in late 1941 (the cover date of her first recorded adventure) and continued her adventures for at least ten more years, until the Justice Society went into temporary retirement. It is not certain whether she abandoned her activities at that time, or instead continued her career for a few more years -- but we do know that she was in semi-retirement by the early Sixties, for Vandal Savage used a complicated scheme to lure her and her fellow retirees in the JSA into active service, so that he might capture them. (See the FLASH story, "Vengeance of the Immortal Villain.") The exact dating of her "birth" -- her molding out of clay -- is uncertain. We know she was at least seventeen when Steve Trevor landed on Paradise Island in 1941, for in WONDER WOMAN #1 we learned she was fifteen years old when she received her Aphroditian bracelets of submission, and two panels later, the narration states, "Years later, as the princess and her friend Mala stand together on a cliff" -- they sight Steve Trevor. The phrase, "Years later" means at least two years have passed, making her at least seventeen. But it is by no means certain how many years had actually elapsed -- for all we know, Diana could have been thousands of years old. But the latest possible birth-date for the Golden Age Wonder Woman is 1924. The earliest is very early indeed -- for in a 1944 story, Hippolyte left Paradise Island to help her daughter, and according to the narration, "for the first time in 4000 years the Amazon Queen leaves Paradise Island." That means that the Amazons colonized Paradise Island circa 2056 B.C., which means that is the earliest possible birthdate for the Earth-2 Wonder Woman. (However, since Heracles plays a prominent role in the cause of the Amazons migration to Paradise Island, and Heracles' son and grandson took part in the Trojan War, a more likely date is circa 1300 B.C., since archaeologists believe -- on Earth-Real, at any rate -- that Troy fell around 1200 B.C. Assuming the Earth-2 Troy fell at the same date -- since most other historical events

parallel themselves on Earth-1, Earth-2, and Earth-Real...I tend to think that the "four thousand years" was a slight exaggeration on Moulton's part, actually being closer to three thousand.)

The Earth-1 picture is more complicated.

We know that Wonder Woman was around and operating in "Man's World" in February of 1959, the first Justice League gathering. (See JLA #144, "The Origin of the Justice League -- Minus One!") A statement she made a few issues earlier, about how there was a Wonder Woman long before there was a Justice League, indicates that she started her career at least a year or two previously. As Strick so rightly pointed out in the lettercol of HOLA! #2, Wonder Girl's origins give us a better idea on when Wonder Woman started operating. The Teen Titans were formed in late 1964, and Wonder Girl was at least thirteen at that time, or else she could hardly be a "Teen" Titan. Wonder Girl, until she received the treatment by Paula's machine, was a normal human, and therfore we can suppose she aged at a normal rate at least until 1964. That would place her birthdate, at the latest, in 1951.

Since the future Wonder Girl was found by Wonder Woman at the age of two or so -- in 1953 -- we know that the Earth-1 Wonder Woman was operating in 1953. This is the earliest date we can give to one of Wonder Woman's actions that definitely take place on Earth-1. (It's true that Minister Blizzard appears in one JLA tale, but I assume -- as in the case of the Cheetah and Paula vonGunther -- that this is a case of duplication between the two Earths. Blizzard fought Wonder Woman of Earth-2 in '48, but the Earth-1 Blizzard and WW probably fought in the early Fifties in an unrecorded adventure.)

Assuming that WW was, at the youngest, eighteen when she started her career, and that she found the future Wonder Girl almost immediately after coming to "Man's World", that would place her birth in 1935, at the latest.

Unfortunately, there is a slight hitch.

In the famous (or infamous) "switch in earths" issue, WW #228, Wonder Woman of Earth-1 states unequivocally, "Why, I wasn't even born in 1943!" If we accept that, then she was, at the most, nine years old when she rescued the two-year-old Wonder Girl.

Strick, in the lettercol of HOLA! #2 dismisses this statement entirely. Were WW a normal being, I would certainly agree with her that this is one of the numerous mistakes that the writers and artists occasionally lapse into. But another possibility exists.

We must remember that Wonder Woman, from her very origin, is no ordinary being. Do babies molded from clay and given life by Aphrodite and Athene grow at the same rate as normal beings? Since the story in WW #1, the only story to give her age at various stages of life on Paradise Island,is definitely the Earth-2 version, we find we have no reliable yardstick to determine at what rate Earth-1's Princess Diana grew.

It's true that many of the Wonder Girl stories that concerned Princess Diana (as opposed to the Teen Titans' Wonder Girl) call her a "teen-ager," indicating her age is at least thirteen. But these Wonder Girl stories proved themselves inaccurate in many details (the viewing of her future self, for instance) and the reference to Wonder Girl as a teen-ager might refer to her physiological and mental maturity, rather than mere chronological time. She might have been six years old, but with the body and mind of a sixteen-year-old. No specific age in years in any Wonder Girl story I have read is mentioned -- although my collection is by no means complete. Eagle-eyed readers correct me if I'm wrong. There is only one story which mentions an age for a Wonder Girl, but both Strick and I agree that this took place to

Juno, the Teen Titans' Wonder Girl.

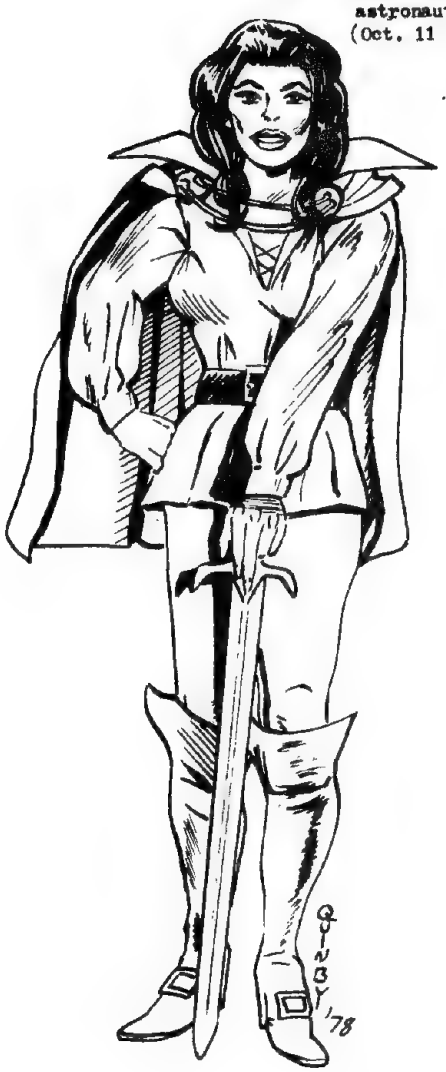
We must remember that Hippolyte is the daughter of Ares, one of the Olympian gods. And the gods matured at an astonishing rate. According to THE GREEK MYTHS by Robert Graves, Leto gave birth to Artemis on Ortygia. No sooner was Artemis born, than she was able to assist her mother across the narrow straits to the isle of Delos, and helped Leto deliver Apollo in the ninth day of labor. The new-born Hermes was able to steal Apollo's cattle and invent the lyre. Is it so astonishing that Princess Diana, granddaughter to Ares, half-brother of Artemis and Hermes, should grow up at a much faster than normal rate?

Thus, since we might expect from her heredity for Diana to grow much faster than normal, I am going to accept Diana's statement that she was born later than 1943 -- probably in 1944, some twenty years after the latest possible birthdate for her Earth-2 "twin."

To name one more example: Apollo, when he was but four days old, called for Hephaestus to provide him with bow and arrows, and went on to immediately slay Python, the mighty serpent. This according to Graves' GREEK MYTHS. Of course, one at a physiological age of four days cannot hold, string, or aim a bow, so the gods grow much more swiftly than normal mortals, a fact Robert Graves mentions. Diana didn't grow up that swiftly, but she seems to have grown up at least twice the speed of normal mortals -- so that at the age of nine, in 1953, she was physiologically eighteen.

With this in mind, we can do a chart of the prominent dates in thw two Wonder Women's lives.

	EARTH-TWO	EARTH-ONE
1300 BC	The Amazons flee to Paradise Island.	The Amazons flee to Paradise Island.
1924 AD	The latest possible birth-date for Wonder Woman.	
1941	Steve Trevor lands. Princess Diana becomes Wonder Woman.	
1942	Wonder Woman joins the JSA.	
1944		The earliest possible birth-date for Wonder Woman, if we accept her own statement.
1951	The last known case of the JSA, pre-retirement.	The future Wonder Girl is born.
1953		Steve Trevor lands. Princess Diana becomes Wonder Woman. WW rescues the two-year-old Wonder Girl.
1959		The JLA is formed, with WW as a charter member. (Feb. 11th and 12th.)
1963	The JSA, with WW, come out of retirement.	
1964		Wonder Girl joins Teen Titans.
1968		WW loses her Amazon powers, meets I-Ching, Steve Trevor dies, and WW resigns from the JLA.
1973		I-Ching dies -- Diana becomes Wonder Woman again -- starts her UN job.
1974		Wonder Woman starts her "trials" to rejoin the JLA.
1976		WW rejoins the League.
1978		Steve Trevor is resurrected. Steve Trevor dies again. Diana Prince becomes an astronaut. (Oct. 11 and 12)



This is a very tentative, preliminary time-line for the two Wonder Women, but I believe it is the first time such a thing has been attempted. I would place Earth-2's Steve Trevor's birthdate around 1919, making him twenty-two (the probably age for a young captain in military intelligence) when he first landed on Paradise Island. Earth-1's Steve Trevor was probably also twenty-two when he landed on Paradise Island, and that would put his birth around 1931. When he died the first time in 1968, he was thirty-seven -- perhaps uncomfortably aware that he was getting older, whereas WW wasn't aging at all. We assume he was the same physiological age when he was resurrected, so he was about thirty-nine, physiologically, when he died the second time. Diana is (as of 1978) chronologically thirty-four, but even though she renounced her immortality when she left Paradise Island,* she still does not seem to be aging quite as swiftly as normal humans. However, Diana Prince's birthdate in the records is probably 1935, making her, according to the offical records, forty-three today. (It is significant that, in 1974, in her Diana Prince guise, she had a single grey streak in her hair. Evidently she was aware that Diana should be aging normally and added a bit of grey to her hair via a bleach.)

The Earth-2 WW is at least fifty-four, although again, she does not seem to be aging at a normal rate.

Evidently Paula's modified Purple Ray, which gave Wonder Girl Amazon strength and speed, also was able to approximate Amazon immortality by causing an extreme slowing-down of the aging process. Although Wonder Girl stopped being a chronological teenager around 1970, when she turned twenty, she is still physiologically around eighteen, and probably will remain so for decades. (No, I have no explanation why Robin, Kid Flash, Speedy, and the other Titans don't age -- at least for now. I'm only discussing Wonder Girl.) Thus, whereas Wonder Woman had an extremely accelerated childhood, Wonder Girl has an extremely prolonged one. She is still a "Teen Titan", physiologically and in mental attitude -- after all, when one associates with young people -- when one is assumed by adults to be around eighteen-- one tends to act eighteen.

I think a date might even be hazarded as to the day, or at least the month, in which Diana was "born." Since Diana was brought to life by Aphrodite (after Athene taught Hippolyte to mold the statues which would someday become Diana and Nubia) the most likely time for such an awesome event would be a time holy to Aphrodite, when she is at her strongest and most generous. Will Durant, in his LIFE OF GREECE, mentions that "At the beginning of April various cities in Greece celebrated her (Aphrodite's) great festival, the Aphrodisia"-- so I would very tenta-

*Then again, sometimes the comics say she did renounce her immortality, while at other times they say she's still immortal. I think that while the Earth-2 version might have renounced it, when the Amazons gave their secret of immortality to everyone (see last issue's "Forum"), she became immortal along with everyone else. WW-1, however, did not become mortal when she became WW; during her Diana Prince period, she renounced her heritage and immortality, but after the Amazons returned, she again became immortal. Someday I'll find the facts to back all this up! -- Strick

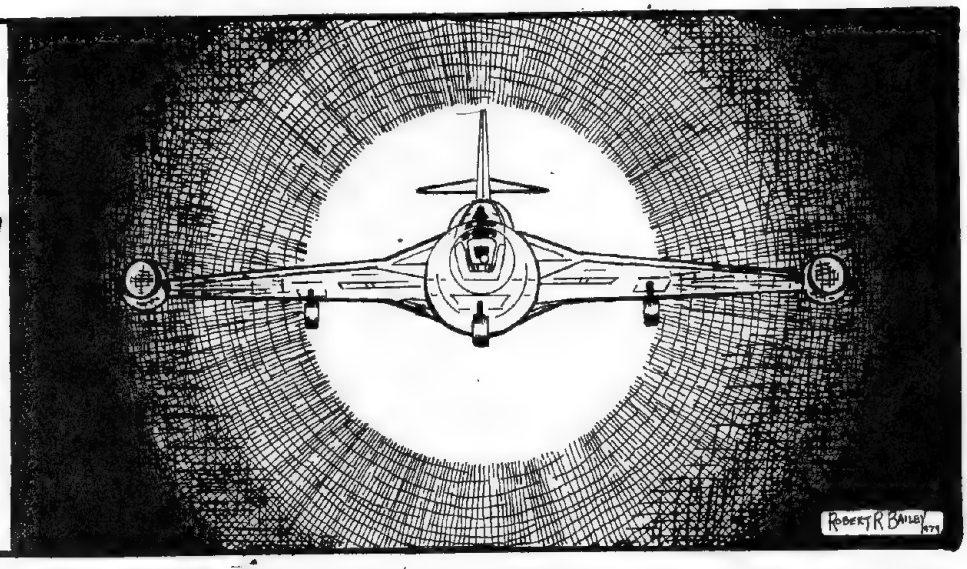
tively guess that Diana was born during the first few days of April. It would be an act of lese-majesty to suggest that Princess Diana was an April Fool's joke, so I personally favor April 2 as Diana and Nubia's birthdate -- either in 1924 at the latest, or 1944 at the earliest, depending on which Earth you fancy. (The winter solstice is a possibility, however, since the Amazons called it "Diana's Day", and she was named Diana -- an almost inevitable name if she was born on that day. However, to my thinking, Hippolyte left the child unnamed until "Diana's Day," and then officially named her Diana, hoping for the favor of Artemis, who was conspicuous in her absence among the gods and goddesses who gave their blessings to the infant Diana.)

That would make infant Diana's sun-sign Aries, and she has many traits in common with those born under such a sign -- if I may digress into the ancient and esteemed pseudo-science of astrology. Those born under this sun-sign find that "Life for them must be exciting, and they must be self-reliant. They are essentially fearless, and like to move quickly and positively, taking the full consequences of whatever they do. These people are determined to get on the inside of things and to control the machinery of life." All traits to be observed in Wonder Woman. However, those born under that sun-sign tend to "not care much for abstract considerations" and "give little thought to other people." The first description MIGHT fit. Diana Prince has always chosen jobs which demand more action than abstract thinking. She is much more the intelligence agent than a scientist. But the second we must reject utterly. Wonder Woman obviously DOES give much thought to other people -- although her personal relations sometimes show traces of callousness, in her relations with Steve Trevor and the Flash. Still, no one exactly matches one's sun-sign -- the planets in the other houses of your horoscope contribute something, also, although the sun-sign is dominent.

Arians tend to be somewhat arrogant and aggressive. Those are traits that Wonder Woman can control most of the time, but she does have them...as one might expect from a princess. To quote the Flash in his thoughts about Wonder Woman (JLA #141), "She did it to me again! I ask a simple question, and she makes me feel like a jerk!" Wonder Woman rarely lets this side of her personality show, but she does have it. Arians also do not let other people influence them once they have made up their mind -- as shown by the fact that, although the rest of the Justice Leaguers begged her to rejoin the League immediately, it was Wonder Woman herself who decided to go through the "twelve trials" business before rejoining, and could not be dissuaded. Aries rules the brain -- and although Wonder Woman is more comfortable during definite action rather than abstract thinking, when the need arose, she was still quite capable of developing the "purple ray" to save Steve Trevor's life.

So, all in all, the astrological, theological, and chronological evidence would seem to support the idea that Wonder Woman was born on April 2, 1924, on Earth-2, and April 2, 1944, on Earth-1.

THE AMAZING INVISIBLE PLANE



by 'Ron

The most spectacular of all the Wonder Weapons used by Wonder Woman is not a product of magic, but of the advanced Amazon sciences. Used only as a transportation vehicle for Wonder Woman (and Wonder Girl) to fly in by ABC and almost totally ignored by CBS (it was only used in their first episode), the Invisible Plane did not reach its potential on the Tube. (CBS had Wonder Woman fly commercial to where the action was as Diana Prince.)

DC Comics gives us a much better treatment of this Amazon weapon and we can only expect it to be featured even more as Diana's role as protector of not only Earth, but also the space around the planet, is explored. Although DC has not been fully consistent with their treatment of the origin of the plane, it has not been more inconsistent than the editors have been with the rest of the Wonder Woman legend. If Strick contends that there have been four Amazons called Wonder Woman*, I can certainly theorize that there were at least three and more -- likely four or more Robot Planes.

To quickly recap the origin of the first plane, we must start with the problem faced by Queen Hippolyte when Steve Trevor crashed near Paradise Island and Diana was chosen to become the Wonder Woman and save mankind from itself. How could the injured Steve be transported to the U.S.? The answer of course was to have a plane constructed which was silent and invisible to the eye for Hippolyte's daughter to use in returning the pilot -- and in her battles against evil. Perhaps too, the queen wanted to be sure that her daughter would have a ready way to return to Paradise Island, although at her leaving, Diana was not aware that she would be allowed by the goddesses to return from time to time.

The first plane was a propeller aircraft with a single seat for its Amazon pilot and a portable cot for Steve. Wonder Woman, wearing star-spangled coulottes instead of shorts and sans her magic lasso (which had not yet been made by Hippolyte) flew off into the unknown world of war and hatred. Her propeller plane was first stored in an old, abandoned barn while Diana began to develop her dual identity and protect Washington, DC from enemy aircraft and agents. This barn must have been near Washington, because at first the plane had a "robot control", similar to an automatic pilot device, but did not have the ability to respond to the Amazon's voice commands. This device was built by Mala and other Amazon scientists on a subsequent trip back to Paradise Island. The principle involved is similar to that of the Mental Radio (there is one in the Invisible Plane) but it would appear that Wonder Woman must voice her command to the plane's robot device. Perhaps this permits the plane to home on the direction of the instructions. Of course the plane can still be operated in a normal manner by Steve or anyone with piloting skills. And the robot controls respond only to the special vibrations of Wonder Woman's voice -- none other. Only today is voice pattern identification becoming a means of identification.

No one seems to know just what the speed of the Invisible Plane is, although it must be of considerable speed above that of

* /Due to popular opinion (and recent issues), I've trimmed my count down to three, leaving out WW-2;Drusilla, who was really WW-2;Diana all the time, I guess. Of course this tally doesn't include temporary usurpers of the title, such as WW #250-1's Orana; nor does it include Nubia, who is Wonder Woman on the African continent, although we may assume that the name "Wonder Woman" is in either Hausa or Swahili, just as Diana's title of "Wonder Woman" is the English translation of the Amazonian dialect of Greek. -- S/

other contemporary planes, for it is frequently summoned by the mighty maiden, who leaps to its wing and performs a spectacular rescue, either by catching a falling object (which frequently was Steve) in her arms or by lassoing a crippled aircraft and hauling it to safety.

The plane is unarmed, but Wonder Woman herself is its weapon as she practices "Bullets and Bracelets" or whips her lasso from a stable position on one of the wings. For rescues, a rope ladder could be extended from the bottom of the plane.

This first plane appears to have been more destructable than later jet models which the Amazon flies. At least the shell was bulletproof, being made with an alloy of Amazonium. Wonder Woman's bracelets and tiara are also made of Amazonium, which is the hardest metal known and so can also be used to deflect bullets and other objects jurled at her by her foes.

With the end of World War II Wonder Woman's mission widens and her acceptance is greatly expanded. We find the government more and more calling on Steve to have Wonder Woman assist with a a space retrieval and a greater number of aliens being noticed near Earth. Amazon science comes to the rescue again as it develops a "contact space suit" to be worn on missions outside our atmosphere. The suit is a thin film, as invisible as the plane, so WW could appear in her familiar costume on other planets and in outer space. Meanwhile Steve is stuck with his bulky U.S. style life support system suit. The beautiful Amazon's legend spreads across the universe! And with the new space adventures, a new plane is needed, one which is faster than any propeller craft -- a jet. Again it is silent and invisible to the eye. It can be used as a jet or a rocket ship beyond our atmosphere because of its unique fuel. In space the new plane must fly at speeds of a million or more miles per hour, for we see Wonder Woman and Steve pilot to Mars, Venus, and beyond, without apparent extra food for her beau. More than a single day without nourishment would be asking a lot of Steve, although we would not expect it to be a great inconvenience to Wonder Woman.

Within our atmosphere a lower speed of operation would be necessitated by the resistance of the air itself and at the lower speed we again frequently see Wonder Woman balanced on the wing of her new Robot Plane making a daring rescue or leaping downward for a glide to earth. The relative invisibility of her plane and her gliding ability have led some people to believe that Wonder Woman can fly. Unlike Supergirl or her famous cousin, "it ain't so." Gliding has its benefits, though, for on at least one occasion Wonder Woman has slipped accidentally off the wing of her Robot Plane.

Wonder Woman's jet had a sliding canopy, straight wings in the back which swept forward toward the fuselage to permit her to climb in and out of the cockpit and two seats -- with additional room for several of her friends -- or captured villains -- to be transported behind these seats. Often Wonder Woman simply lassoed her adversaries and dragged them through the air.

Like her first plane, this one was equipped with a hatch in the bottom for entrance from below as the plane sped on its course, set by command from the Amazon's voice. An omni-receiver was also built into the plane, which could pick up distress signals on any frequency as well as calls from Trevor and Queen Hippolyte. This plane appeared to be able to survive a ducking into the sea or could be rammed into invading space craft. WW #157, "I, the Bomb," has a good picture of the omni-receiver and scenes in whic which the plane is used to rip the wings off enemy aircraft, as well as a spectacular lasso trick by WW from the wing of her plane. The plane appears to have the same shape and stick controls as a U.S. style jet fighter, but we know that it is far more advanced.

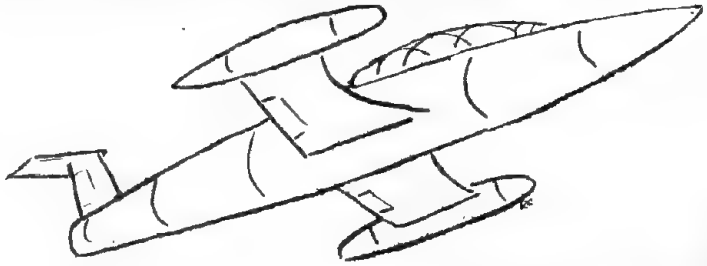
All this, of course, was "before." Before Diana lost her super powers and became an ordinary, er, an extraordinary mortal woman. In issue #179 the Invisible Plane follows Paradise Island into another dimension after returning Diana to New York.

Issue #204 marks Diana's return to Amazon powers and her Wonder Weapons. But a new Robot Plane is not ready and she returns this time from Paradise Island in an Amazon submarine which departs again for the Bermuda Triangle after delivering the princess to New York harbor. By her next adventure, Wonder Woman is able to summon a swept-wing, new design Amazon plane. It looks like a part of the Amazon battle fleet, and appears to be white in color, not transparent; a single-seat fighter type. Issues #205 and 206 feature this plane which we must assume is a stand-in while the completion of the permanent Invisible Plane is being carried out by Amazon scientists.

Many readers consider the next several issues to be dreams influenced in Wonder Woman's mind by he memory tapes, and it's understandable that the planes which appear in these stories are simply blob shapes and never similar -- it is a dream plane. When Wonder Woman begins her tests to rejoin the Justice League, however, the familiar invisible Robot Plane returns to the pages of WW magazine. Issue #214 provides us with a good look at this formidable machine, complete with a mental radio, speed enough to catch up with the Air Force's fastest bomber, and a statement that the plane does not show up on radar. Why doesn't it show when even a flock of birds will show on today's sophisticated equipment? The question is really not too complicated, and deals with why the planes have appeared to be invisible all along. Vibrations. Extremely rapid vibrations of the molecules in the Robot Plane move so rapidly that they do not appear to the human eye, much as we seem to see through the blades of a rapidly whirling pinwheel or helicopter rotor. Of course Wonder Woman can see her plane with her improved Amazon vision, and we can detect a slight blurring of the space which it occupies -- if we know where to look and there is a background other than sky to highlight the blur. Radar beams just pass through the vibrations -- and keep right on going.

And so the stories continue, while the Amazon proves to herself that she is worthy of membership in the Justice League. Next we are exposed to the Earth-2 Wonder Woman, with her naturally older style plane, and finally the present Wonder Woman of Earth-1 returns, the woman who recently joined NASA as an astronaut. Fittingly enough, Amazon science has come up with yet a further improved Robot Plane. More than ever it has the shape of a rocket, while maintaining wings for better maneuverability near Earth. It is sleeker, with perhaps an even smaller cabin inside -- and is that a computer similar to an R2 unit behind Wonder Woman on page 9 of #252? Of course it has a mental radio unit for calling her mother on Paradise Island. Gone is the old rope ladder, as Diana and Orana both seem to enter from the ground or tops of buildings by lassoing a wingtip and willing the magic lasso to contract -- it sure beates climbing all that distance!

Did anybody keep count? How many different Robot Planes were there? It doesn't really matter. No doubt somewhere in the Bermuda Triangle, Mala, Paula, and their scientists continue to work, and one day yet another, more advanced invisible Robot Plane will respond to the voice of Wonder Woman!



Can Age Wither Her?

THE CANARY CONUNDRUM

by Kathleen Glancy

Just why is it that the Black Canary has worn so much better than her former colleagues in the JSA? I can only half-accept Strick's theory that the inhabitants of Earth-2 age slowly. They do age slowly in comparison with Earth-Real -- but so do the people of Earths-1, -Marvel, -X, -Disney, -Archie, and so forth. The Canary's youth in comparison to the rest of the JSA needs some other explanation.

My theory is that there was, once, a warp in the dimensional barrier between Earths-1 and -2 which had the effect of causing the traveller between Earths to move in time as well as space. To be precise, the traveller from Earth-2 went ten years into the future; the traveller from Earth-1, ten years into the past. In JLA #82 the statement is made that Earth-2 is "ten years behind" Earth-1. The simplest explanation for this is that the JLA found that when, say, they left Earth-1 in 1969 it was 1959 on Earth-2. (I know, I know, this mucks up the JSA's "ten-year retirement." But after all, when things are being telepathically transmitted from Earth-1 or -2 to Earth-Prime to Earth-Real there is bound to be a certain amount of garbling. Obviously, because ten years had passed on Earth-Real the writers there made it ten years retirement for the JSA, when the actual hiatus was much shorter) There is supporting evidence for this being the case in Hawkman's remarks in JLA #76 about the villains on Earth-1 being more dangerous, because more technologically advanced, than those on Earth-2, and in the Canary's own subsequent remark a few issues later that she is having difficulty adjusting to the JLA's futuristic technology -- the natives of Earth-1 have taken to it easily.*

But, I hear you say, there is no such discrepancy NOW, is there? It is 1979 on both Earths and Earth-2 is, in some aspects at least, the more advanced of the two. Very true. But let us, for a moment, leave the Canary aside and consider a bird of another feather, Robin the... MAN Wonder? Because he's got to be at least in his early 30's -- the Huntress is 21, and at the very least he must be 12 years her senior, and probably more. But look at his character so depicted in JLAs #91 and 92 -- does that suggest to you a man of exceptional ability in his middle-to-late twenties? Does it not rather show one in his late teens or early twenties, still not quite sure of himself, still in the shadow of a not-yet-completely-retired legend of even more exceptional ability? I think it does. (Yes indeed, that DOES mean he was very young when inducted into the JSA in JLA #55. Why should such a brilliant crimefighter NOT be accepted despite being very young, especially when his mentor had semi-retired to devote more time to his family? And is it my fault if the Earth-Real artist bidden to cash in on the camp Batman craze drew him to look a lot older?) And -- hold it a minute -- JLAs #91 and 92? The story about the alien kids with a dimensional-hopping buggy. A vehicle which, in the hands of a pilot not properly qualified to handle it, could very probably actually affect the dimensional warps through which it passed. Could, in fact, straighten out the kink in the corridor between Earths -1 and -2, so that now travel from one Earth led you to the same year on the other. I think there is a case for this having happened, though it took a year before conditions stabilized.

This, of course, would mean that there was a period of eleven years or so when the JSA were unable to contact Earth-1. But this wouldn't worry them unduly -- their sorcerous and scientific abilities told them what had happened. And it was an exciting eleven years on Earth-2, full of technological and social advances, so the time passed quickly for them. The JLA, meantime, were also unworried. They couldn't contact Earth-2 for a year, but then they were used to only doing so once a year (in fact it only used to be possible once a year, and they didn't yet know that the connection in the dimensional corridor had also removed this restriction) and for them only a year passed before the teams met again. And when they did, it was as usual in mid-crisis, and the JLA didn't have time to comment on how much older their friends were looking (an impolite point to bring up during battle, anyway), or ask what year it was on Earth-2, until it was all over and they were off-panel to us.

So the answer to the question at the head of the article is yes, age can wither the Black Canary. Eventually. But she lucked out over the rest of the JSA because she, already the baby of the team before Robin joined (assuming she started her career at 17½ or 18 she may have been a good ten years younger than most of them) gained the equivalent of ten years' suspended animation in comparison to them. For the answer to the subsequent question: "Can Custom Stale Her Infinite Variety?" application should be made to Oliver Queen on Earth-1.

* A totally irrelevant aside: in researching this article it strikes me that Green Arrow started putting the moves on the Canary with indecent haste -- the unfortunate Mr. Lance was hardly cold in his grave before his widow was looking elsewhere.

The Elementary Yet All-Encompassing Explanation for Everything and Everyone... Almost

by Al Schroeder III

Something does not compute.

Van-Zee, a Kryptonian native, and Sylvia DeWitt, an earthling, married and had two children. Kryp and Tonn, natives of different planets and presumably different races, nevertheless were the ultimate ancestors for the entire Kryptonian race. In the "Adult Legion" stories, we learned that Bouncing Boy, an earthling, and Duo Damsel, a native of the planet Cargg, had children... as did Phantom Girl and Ultra Boy, natives of different planets, and various other Legionnaires. (Of course, many of the Legionnaires' worlds might be colonies of Earth -- yet one cannot help but gaze suspiciously as those with hereditary abilities, such as Carggians, Bgtzlians, and especially Braalans, whose magnetic powers evolved because of the presence of "metal monsters", obviously are humanoid, not human.) Daxam and Colu, of course, definitely existed before Earth's era of spaceflight, although there is no indication that Mon-El or Brainiac 5 had children by any women from another race. Still, they are as suspiciously humanoid as the other races. Parallel evolution is one thing, but the startling resemblance of Kryptonians and earthlings, despite

the enormously different environments in which they were evolved, raises some serious questions.

Nor is this oddness limited to Earth-1's universe. The Supreme Intelligence once spoke of "breeding" Ms. Marvel with the Kree to produce a race with the best traits of both races. Granted that Ms. Marvel's body is now similar to a Kree's, it cannot be exactly like a Kree's, or else there would be no benefit to producing such children. And various issues of CAPTAIN MARVEL make it clear that the original Kree were blue-skinned, and that only through intermarriage through the various subject races they conquered did the various skin colors among the Kree Empire develop. Captain Mar-Vell himself appears to be the child of such a union.

WHICH IS IMPOSSIBLE.

Or at least, astronomically unlikely. A human being cannot even have children by the apes, his nearest evolutionary "cousins", because the number of chromosomes differ. And yet here we're talking about cross-breeding between natives of entirely different evolutionary trees. Sylvia should have more in common with an ear of corn than with Van-Zee. And yet -- despite the incredible odds -- the gene structure, the DNA code, and all the rest -- seem to match perfectly. Poul Anderson once said, "No matter how big the universe, we are stretching the odds if we think we might ever find another (alien) race by whom we could have children."

The humanoid form is more likely, yet so many! A few races that might resemble humanity are possible...yet we know of many. Kryptonians, Daxamites, natives of Colu (skin color I consider a minor variation), the Kree, the people of Titan, Kryp's race, Tonn's race, among dozens of others, even discounting the worlds of the Legion's future, which are probably mostly Earth colonies. Despite incredibly different capabilities and being raised on highly different planets, these races look almost exactly alike -- as do the natives of New Genesis, Rann, and to some extent Apokolips and J'Onn J'Onzz's Martians.

The obvious answer is that all these races are related to each other, perhaps far-flung colonies of some now-vanished interstellar empire. However, we must rule that out. We know ONE of the planets in question very well: Earth, and the evidence is quite clear and convincing that man is a product of evolution, according to the fossil evidence. Nor can we assume that earth once was the center of an interstellar empire in some forgotten epoch. No remains of such a culture has been unearthed, and further, many of the worlds in question -- Hala, New Genesis, and Krypton being notable examples -- appeared to be civilized at dates predating earth-humanity's very existence. (To say nothing of such races as the Guardians of Oa, the Watchers, and Galactus' home race, which are pretty humanoid in appearance.)

Is there a third explanation?

There is. And it is contained in the now-defunct ETERNALS series. In it, we learn that the "Celestials", aliens of immense power and age, once kidnapped an apelike primate and subjected it to delicate biochemical genetic tampering, somehow encoding its genes so that this ape would eventually be the common ancestor of three races, one of them humanity. That the eventual shape and form humanity would assume was predetermined through genetic manipulation.

Is it likely that the Celestials did this to but one planet? Hardly. Kirby made it quite clear that there were other such "experiments." Obviously Hala, the Kree's home world, was one. Another obvious one in Zenn-La, the Silver Surfer's world. I further suggest that there were even earlier examples, that the Watcher's race and Galactus' race were probably among the first of the Celestials' "experiments." This genetic tampering resulted in a similar form and almost identical genetic structure -- since it was the genes the Celestials were tampering with -- among many races of differing capabilities and environments. (Like Hala's greater gravity and differing atmosphere from Earth.) In each case, they probably altered the genes of a somewhat ape-like being, and knew it would be the ancestor of a human-like race.

I, like many fans, believe the Superman/Spider-Man conflict was on a parallel world, not truly Earth-1 or Earth-Marvel, and yet it is obvious that a similar agency is operating in Earth-1's universe. So similar, in fact, that I believe it is the same agency, that the Celestials not only conducted their experiments in Earth-Marvel's universe, but many universes throughout the omniverse, to use Mark Gruenwald's useful term. After all, if the JLA and the Avengers on their respective worlds have learned of, and travelled to, parallel planets -- if the awesomely powerful Watcher can observe the various parallel worlds in WHAT IF--? -- the awesome Celestials probably also knew of the parallel worlds.

Probably their first experiment was Oa, which was to become the world of the Guardians. Other early planets would have been the "parent" planet of the Old Gods, which later became New Genesis and Apokolips, Kryp's home world (Daxam, perhaps?), Tonn's home world (Lexor, perhaps?), and numerous others.

It's true that Orion, in NEW GODS #16, claimed that the Old Gods were alive when Earth was first created, and made man in their image. And surely I would be the last to doubt that the Old

Gods did visit primitive humanity, and hid the Anti-Life Equation in their very genes. But I think Orion exaggerated a bit. It is surely obvious that Rann, Earth, Krypton and New Genesis/Apokolips had a common origin -- yet Darkseid looked for the Anti-Life Equation ONLY on Earth. There was never the slightest hint that the New Genesis/Apokolips war was carried to any other planet -- but if the Old Gods' world was the parent race for ALL of cosmic humanity, we would expect the Anti-Life Equation to be hidden among many worlds.

Therefore, I think Earth-1 was also a Celestial "experiment", as was its nearest neighbor, Rann, circling Alpha Centauri.

We know that by Superman's time there are many humanoid worlds in the galaxy: Rann, Daxam, Colu, New Genesis/Apokolips, Korugor, Lexor, and what's left of Krypton. Strick thinks that Braal was a former colony of Earth that extracted the genetic secret of magnetic powers from the former natives of Braal, and by the 30th Century had firmly established it in their own genetic makeup. Possibly, but since such humanoid worlds that are NOT Earth colonies such as Krypton and Daxam are already established, I suspect the original account is largely true. An ape-like being DID evolve magnetic powers to battle the metal monsters of that world. Then that being, altered by the Celestials, became the forebear of Cosmic Boy's race. Perhaps the same holds true for Cargg, Duo Damsel's home planet, and Bgtzl, Phantom Girl's other-dimensional home, and even Element Lad's race. (For that matter, a Superboy story, "The Secret of the Second Superboy", introduced Krag, a young boy from Saturn's moon, Titan. He had powers of heat and cold production, flying, and TELEPATHY. Perhaps Saturn Girl's Titanians are a hybrid race, composed of human colonists from Earth and the last of Krag's dying culture? Most of the powers of Krag's race died out through genetic assimilation, but the Titanians retained their telepathic powers.

One suspects that the Celestials also tampered with Earth-2, due to the remarkable resemblance between the natives of Earth-2 and Krypton-2 (Power Girl's home world) despite their vastly different abilities. We as yet do not know if Clark and Lois Kent had any children, but many of us suspect they did. Such a thing would be possible only through Celestial genetic manipulation.

Gerry Conway in his stories of both Earth-1 and -2 often speaks of the Krull race, which vanished long millenia ago. Perhaps this is the true name for the Celestials? We know that Shrinking Violet's home world was a direct colony by the Krulls, colonized a million years before the 30th Century. Or perhaps the Krulls were merely one of the first races to go space-faring, one of the first of the Celestials' experiments.

Of course, many races evolved without the Celestials' interference. The Skrulls almost certainly did, and the Colonizers, and

Tomar-Re's home world. I suspect Chameleon Boy's home world of Durla is also non-Celestial. He is somewhat humanoid, but not nearly as much as most of the other Legionnaires.

At any rate, I think the evidence is clear for several conclusions. (1) There must have been some sort of genetic tampering involved in the past for both Krypton's race, and Earth's, or else Van-Zee and Sylvia DeWitt would not have had their twins, (2) so many other races are so perfectly humanoid in appearance -- skin color being an ultra-minor variation, like the green-skinned natives of Colu -- that the probability is that the same agency produced them, and (3) such a race has been discovered in the Earth-Marvel universe, the Celestials, and again the probability is that they planted the "seeds" that sprouted throughout the omniverse.

Legion historians and theoreticians are invited to write me and disagree, but I will demand an explanation of Van-Zee's twins. I give you fair warning.

I think we are all seeds of the Celestials.

(cont. from p.15)

and the phenomena themselves as manifestations of magic! This is certainly a logical explanation for the variety of effects Tyroc seems to produce.

As for Marzal, how did there get to be an island made up of only blacks on 30th Century Earth? How did they become separated from mainstream society? To my eyes, it appears that this can only be the island of Mwanamkekuu (which is the closest my Swahili dicitionary will come to "Wonder Woman"; meaning Nubia). Her island, referred to only as "the floating island", was populated only by blacks, and was able to disappear from human view, to pop back into the real world every now and then. During these wars of the 1990's that Blackwolf talked about ant many Legion fans have included in their future histories, the Marzals,* already undergoing severe culture shock due to their liberation from Ares' domination, might pack up their island and disappear for a millenia, until they think things might have cooled off. Thus they'd have a culture as different from Earth's as another planet's -- and a young man of such a culture, a magician of the future, would be so full of possibilities characterwise that he'd be sure to be popular and in demand by readers!

What Tyroc needs is a CHANCE. A chance to be a Legionnaire, not just a black Legionnaire. As it is when a female character is involved in a story invoving sexism, a black character encountering racism in a story can be intriguing once, twice, every once in a while. But to do so in every appearance makes that character cardboard, a symbol of a movement instead of a living, breathing person. Tyroc needs a chance to show us what he's like. To sweep him into some dusty corner of Legion Headquarters is inexcuseable.

*Hmm. Marzals. As in Mars-al, "like Mars," or Ares, who was the mentor of the early Marzals?

Strick:

Received issue #3 a few weeks ago and was quite impressed by it.

You've made great strides since you've started and it really shows. It's a lot thicker and it seems to be better written. Too bad it doesn't come more often.

Really enjoyed the articles on the X-Men. It was thoroughly well written and very complete. Unfortunately, I read it all in a few minutes.

There was only one thing in issue #3 that got me a little mad. Your review of AFTA. How in ***/from here on, expletives deleted. I've been getting complaints! --S/ can ya put that zine down? He charges $1.49 for 208 pages and you charge $1.25 for 21 pages. /But I don't go around demanding that people buy t-shirts and other useless paraphernalia; nor do I demand that certain people should do his bookwork and/or advertising for him. Although it takes me a long time to get certain *ahem* issues out, they do come out, and I don't drive myself or other people bankrupt because of it. --S/ Unfortunately there are people who dislike the zine and they DO something about it, like threatening his life (they have done it). /Although there is a rumor...-S/ So we may lose AFTA cause of f****** people who are so immature. That zine is one h***uva zine and he's not getting the coverage he deserves.

Sorry. I went off the table but I totally disagree with your review.

I wasn't saying your zine is a rip-off. It isn't. It is well worth the $1.25, 'cause there is a lot of information in HOLA!

Anyway, I really hope ya do make it. You have a great zine and hope ya keep it afloat.

Bob Soderberg
1825 Tamarind Ave. #33
Hollywood, CA 90028

Dear Strick,

Thanks for the first three HOLA!s, all of which I enjoyed immensely. I enjoyed "Thermodon" VERY much. I never could figure why Aphrodite, of all goddesses, should create the Amazons. And "Paradise" Island being an ironic joke on her part rings true. The reproduction question was well handled, too. Paula, of course, had her daughter the normal way, but the rest I always wondered about; since I couldn't see THESE Amazons meeting a tribe of men for a once-a-year shindig and splitting the results with them.

Mind you, my personal theory about the REAL origin of Wonder Woman is that Hippolyte was lying through her teeth with the "clay statue" story. After all, we are asked to believe that all Heracles' men did to the Amazons when they enslaved them was chain them up and make them scrub the floors and do the cooking. No WAY -- homosexuality hadn't come into fashion yet, and Heracles himself was reputed to have deflowered 50 virgins in one night. I say that however she acquired the beauty of Aphrodite and the wisdom of Athene Diana got her strength through good old heredity, from her father. Nubia was APHRODITE's daughter by a Nubian, what else, mortal and since the gods were a bit racially prejudiced she had to be fostered out (Ares had killed her father in a jealous rage) so Aphrodite made Hippolyte take her as the price of her helping the Amazons to escape. Then Ares thought what a good idea it would be to use Nubia as a weapon against the Amazons, thus hurting Hippolyte, who had grown fond of the child, AND Aphrodite for her faithlessness and opposition to him. But my holding my own theory did not prevent my enjoyment of the exposition of yours, and I must admit yours is the best supported.

I loved Dusty's explanation of why there is no Black Canary on Earth-1.

I could comment at great length on the question of sexism in comics, but it would be redundant as a longish article on the subject will appear in the UK/HEROINE SHOWCASE, which should be available over with you.

On the WONDER WOMAN SPECTACULAR, my opinion of the armour was that it was meant to insure that WHATEVER happened the Amazons COULDN'T turn their backs on the foe. The thing I liked least about it was the Olympus segment (totally irrelevant parenthesis: the appearance in DETECTIVE comics of a character called Maxie Zeus triggered off the following piece of dialogue in my mind: "Oh my father, be this dread news true? Thy name be truly MAXIE Zeus?"

"Aye, my son. And worse be yet to come. Brace thyself now, for THY name be Hymie Hercules -- just ask Moishe Shazam.") during which Ares/Mars beat up Aphrodite, and Athene just stood there and LET him. Since she can take him any day of the week (see THE ILIAD -- he last about 5 seconds in their fight) this seemed bloody silly.

best wishes,
Kathleen Glancy
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THIS ISSUE:

A LOOK AT THE LEGION

HOLA!